Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

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NEW VRINDABAN

An Overview in Honor Of Its 50th Anniversary

ALSO:

Happiness by Living in Goodness

An Excerpt from Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā: Splendid Instructions To the Mind

Śrīla Prabhupāda Speaks Out: "Knowledge" That's Illusion

Śrī Kṛṣṇa and The Original Sporting Propensity

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Assisting you in your quest for the Absolute Truth

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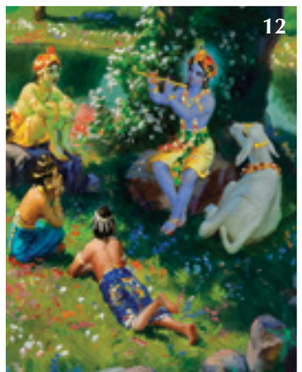
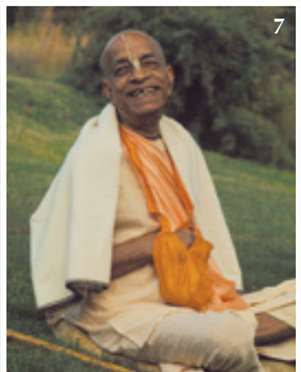
SPECIAL 30-page Pictorial!

New Vrindaban: An Overview p. 32





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COVER An aerial view of the main temple of New Vrindaban, ISKCON's farm community in West Virginia. (Main photo by Malhari Media. Other photos, top left to right: Hari Bhakti Dāsī, Malhari Media, Laxman Poddar [2].)

Welcome

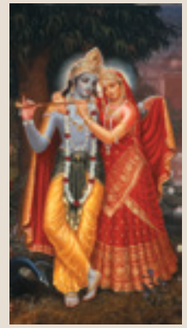
New Vrindaban, ISKCON's first farm community, in the foothills of West Virginia, has seen its ups and downs over the years. During one particularly challenging period, many devotees around the world wondered if it would survive. But some of its dedicated residents ("inmates" in Prabhupāda's charming language) pressed on, weathered the hard times, and are still there today as the community moves steadily ahead to fulfill the goals Prabhupāda set for it. Satyarāja Dāsa's cover story in this issue gives us a good look at the past, present, and future of this important project in Prabhupāda's worldwide movement.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's lecture that opens this issue was given at New Vrindaban, and he speaks about the importance of living in goodness, a fitting tie-in to that community's mission.

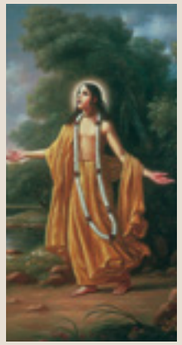
Karuṇā Dhārinī Devi Dāsī's "In Excess of Our Quota" continues the theme of living happily with what Kṛṣṇa in His wisdom provides us.

This issue also includes another excerpt from ISKCON's ever-growing body of literature. This one is from *Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā*, by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the Six Gosvāmīs, prominent contemporary followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This edition of the work contains commentaries by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and ISKCON devotees.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. – *Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Our Purposes

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

FOUNDER (under the direction of His Divine Grace Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda) **His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda** (1896–1977)

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Letters

Overcoming Anxiety, Fear, And Lack of Confidence

How can one live life with full confidence and fearlessness?

Abhishek Bohra
Via the Internet

Our reply: What you ask has a simple answer, but implementing it may not be easy. Lord Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (18.66) that if we just surrender to Him we need not have any fear, because He will protect us from the greatest danger. The greatest danger is taking birth again in the material world and especially loosing the human form of life, which will cause us, the spirit soul, to glide down to a lower birth. That danger can be avoided simply by worshiping Kṛṣṇa.

But worshiping Kṛṣṇa is not always easy. We have countless material desires, and as long as we depend on something material to make us happy, we'll experience fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence.

Anxiety will naturally come because we have no real control over anything. We try our best to make things turn out the way we want, but still bad things happen. Our intention may be good, but sometimes we make mistakes and hurt others. We have plans, but the material energy forces us to drop them. Such is life in the material world.

We lack confidence because we think we have to depend on our limited strength, intelligence, money, and so on to make things work the way we want them to. But generally they don't work the way we want, and no matter how strong or wise or rich we are, we can't change the course of certain events.

We fear because we don't know the future. We are attached to certain outcomes, and we fear they won't be achieved. Although we want to live forever, we won't, and we don't know when or how our time will come, so we fear death. We don't know what will become of us when our body dies, yet we sense there is something more after this life, and so we fear the unknown.

If we want to rid ourselves of fear, anxiety, and lack of confidence, we need to develop faith in Kṛṣṇa and love for Kṛṣṇa. We need to become aware of our nature as spiritual beings with an eternal spiritual relationship with the Supreme Person, Lord Kṛṣṇa. We need to accept that He is in control and that only by accepting His will can we be sure that what is meant to be will turn out for our ultimate good. If we are comfortable with that, then we have no fear or anxiety. We do our best, and Kṛṣṇa does the rest. And we accept whatever He wants. If we trust Him to take care, then we will be peaceful and happy. And we will be inspired to work hard to please Him, and that in turn will make Him happy. Then He will reciprocate with us and bring us back to Him. He will not necessarily make our material life "perfect" (material perfection is not possible), but He will guide us toward spiritual perfection.

It is impossible to be comfortable here in the material world, and if we continue to try to be, we will not do the work necessary to go back to the spiritual world, Goloka Vṛndāvana. If we want the highest happiness – eternal happiness – we need to look outside this material sphere for our pleasure. Material pleasure is always temporary and heavily sprinkled with misery.

Again, the key to becoming free from anxiety, fear, and lack of confidence is to develop faith and confidence in Kṛṣṇa. That means we need to get to know Him by performing devotional service to Him, guided by the instructions He gives in the *Bhagavad-gītā* and through His great devotees. By chanting His name and learning about Him, we can get to know Him – and to know Him is to love Him. We have to reestablish our relationship with Him by being willing to work diligently to attain that goal.

Looking for Clarity

Why am I so confused all the time?

Satish Mishra
Via the Internet

Our reply: Most people are confused but pretend that they know everything and that everything is just fine. All living beings who do not understand their spiritual nature are confused. They misunderstand themselves to be their body and struggle hard to find the pleasure they seek within the sphere of the material world. The fact that they are still regularly frustrated and not really happy is confusing to them. It seems to them that since they are hankering for material objects or relationships, when these come they should bring peace of mind – but they don't. That is certainly confusing. Why do I continue to feel empty, lonely, frustrated, and disturbed even though I am following the crowd and doing all the things I'm supposed to do? And what's more, everyone looks so happy (especially on Facebook). Why am I not happy?

In reality, though, people present themselves as they want others to think they are, not as they really are. And so all the selfies with big smiles are merely a cover for the confusion and dissatisfaction people generally feel. The shops are full of people running here and there to get more things. They're accumulating more gadgets, faster internet, better phones and computers, slicker cars and houses, and yet no one is satisfied. The divorce rate continues to rise, violence and hate seem more prevalent than ever, children are being neglected, bullied by other children, and loosing interest in becoming productive members of society, mother earth is being exploited – these are all signs of a confused, misdirected, and unhappy world.

We are spiritual beings. You are a spiritual being, and until you begin to feed your soul – to nurture who you really are – you will remain confused and frustrated. No material thing can satisfy the spirit soul. Fortunately, feeding the soul is easy in this age, and it's free. All you have to do is chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, study the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and try to associate with people aware of their spiritual nature. As devotees of Kṛṣṇa, we encourage you to learn more about your true identity and needs and to act in wiser ways. Kṛṣṇa's devotees can provide encouragement and guidance to help you cut though your confusion and come to understand the right course of action.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.34) that one must find a guru, inquire from him submissively, and render service to him. The guru will give you real knowledge. Search for such a guru, and you will find the answers to life's questions. Be patient but determined, and your confusion will come to an end.

Replies were written by Krishna.com Live Help volunteers. Please write to us at: BTG, P. O. Box 430, Alachua, Florida 32616, USA. Email: editors@krishna.com.

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FOUNDER'S LECTURE
New Vrindaban, WV, July 21, 1974

Happiness by Living in GOODNESS

We can achieve true peace of mind by cleansing the heart of the influence of nature's modes of passion and ignorance.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ
kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye
ceta etair anāviddhaṁ
sthitaṁ sattve prasīdati

"As soon as irrevocable loving service [to Lord Kṛṣṇa] is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire, and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy."

– *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.19

EVERYONE WANTS happiness and peace of mind. How is it possible? That is explained here: *ceta etair anāviddham*. Everything is within the heart, and we are being disturbed by *rajas* and *tamas*. *Rajas* means passion, or desire for material enjoyment, and *tamas* means ignorance. These give neither enjoyment nor knowledge. An animal has no material enjoyment or knowledge. Similarly, persons who are infected by the *tamo-guṇa*, the mode of ignorance, do not know the meaning of life, nor are they interested to know. People are becoming affected by this *tamo-guṇa*. Therefore even in this Western country they are becoming hippies. No material enjoyment, no spiritual knowledge – simply in darkness.

If we simply practice the process of hearing about Kṛṣṇa, then gradually the darkness of ignorance and passion will disappear. We are suffering in this material life on account of these three modes of material nature – goodness, passion, and ignorance –especially the modes of passion and ignorance. Here is the process for getting out of the modes of passion and ignorance especially, but also the mode of material goodness. Sometimes material goodness is also a cause of bondage. A person falsely thinks, "Now I have become a *brāhmaṇa*" or "I have got a sacred thread; therefore my business is finished. Now I can do anything. It doesn't matter." That is also another bondage. You have to advance further.

Actually, a real *brāhmaṇa* does not think like that – "Because I have got this sacred thread, my business is finished." We offer the sacred thread, but don't make your business finished there. There is further progressive life. After becoming a *brāhmaṇa*, one has to become a Vaiṣṇava.

Today we shall initiate several disciples, the first initiation and the second initiation. The first initiation is to give a chance for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa. The beads are there, and the initiated members will agree to refrain from sinful activities and in pure heart chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. Not in pure heart – the heart is already polluted – but offenseless.

There are ten kinds of offenses. Our members who are going to be initiated should always remember to avoid the offenses. Of course, in the beginning the offenses are there, but if we try to avoid them, then there will be *nāmābhāsa*.

Nāmābhāsa means almost pure chanting of the holy name. And if you attain the state of *nāmābhāsa*, you'll become immediately liberated. And then, when you can chant the *śuddha* holy name – pure, uncontaminated by the material modes of nature – you will develop your love of Kṛṣṇa.

Here it is stated, *rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ*: we are afflicted with the three modes of nature. Out of the three, two are very dangerous. What are they? *Rajas* and *tamas*, passion and ignorance. The whole material world is ongoing on the basis of these two qualities, passion and ignorance. What are the symptoms of passion? *Kāma-lobhādayaś ca ye*: too much attraction to sense gratification. This is called passion. And *lobha*: greediness, not satisfied.

Live the Simple Life

I have just come from a cottage. It is a very nice cottage. It is self-sufficient, with a little land for growing vegetables. Nice cottage, very warm. There is no need of air conditioning. We can live a very simple life anywhere, in any part of the world. There are so many jungles; you cut one or two trees, and with the logs you can make a little cottage. And after the trees are cut, the land becomes open, so you can utilize the land for growing food grains, for pasturing. Then if you have cows, food grains, vegetables, and a cottage, where is your economic problem? Live peacefully in the open air, take sufficient milk and vegetables, and get all the vitamins you need. You get a nice life and save time for chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

This is life. We are trying to introduce this simple life in this New Vrindaban colony. We can live a very simple life, but because we are infected by *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa*, we require the pigeonholes of skyscraper buildings. Unnecessarily. Why?

Your time is so valuable that you cannot get back one day of your life or one moment of your life by paying millions of dollars. Today is the twenty-first of July. Now, the twentieth of July cannot be returned even if you try to bribe material nature with millions of dollars. It is not possible. What is gone is gone. Therefore Cāṇakya Paṇḍita said,

āyuṣa ḥ kṣaṇa eko 'pi
na labhya svarṇa-koṭibhiḥ
na cen nirarthakaṁ nītiḥ
kā ca hānis tato 'dhikā

We cannot get back even a moment of time by payment of millions of gold coins. That is not possible. If you simply waste such valuable time, then just estimate your loss, practically, from the monetary point of view. One moment of your life cannot be returned for millions of dollars.

Therefore our Rūpa Gosvāmī also teaches, *avyartha-kālatvam*. A Kṛṣṇa conscious person should see, "Has my time been wasted? Am I utilizing my time, the short duration of my life, properly?" All Kṛṣṇa conscious persons should be vigilant to see that time is not wasted.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu therefore advises,

tṛṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

"One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly." (*Śikṣāṣṭaka* 3) We have therefore introduced chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day. I am glad to see all the devotees carrying chanting beads; that is a nice practice. It must be done. Chant Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, for twenty-four hours – while working, even while sleeping. If you practice, in sleep also you will chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. That is possible. It is not impossible; it is a fact.

Your time is so valuable that you cannot get back one day of your life or one moment of your life by paying millions of dollars.

The Sattva-guṇa Platform

In human life, if you want actual peace and prosperity you have to keep yourself always in the *sattva-guṇa*, the mode of goodness. This is the brahminical platform. Those who are going to be initiated as *brāhmaṇas* must observe this principle; otherwise what is the use of taking a sacred thread? Don't think that by simply having a sacred thread this business is finished. No. You should practice to keep yourself on the platform of *sattva-guṇa*. That platform of *sattva-guṇa* can be maintained when you are engaged in devotional service. Here it is said, *sthitaṁ sattve prasīdati*: simply by being situated on the platform of goodness you will be happy. *Prasīdati*. You will feel happiness because you are in knowledge. But the *bhakti* process is so transcendental that by discharge of devotional service you will be far above the *sattva-guṇa*.

Sattva-guṇa means material good qualities. But these material good qualities can be contaminated sometimes, because the material nature is very powerful. Very, very powerful. Therefore sometimes we see that those who are not sticking to the principles fall down – immediately. Material nature will drag you. "Please come here." But if you remain fixed in devotional service, then you go above the *sattva-guṇa*. That is stated in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (14.26):

māṁ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate

"One who engages in full devotional service, unfailing in all circumstances, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman." We are introducing this process to become directly a pure devotee. Pure and impure devotees? Yes. Impure means those who are still contaminated by these three qualities, *sattva-guṇa*, *rajo-guṇa*, *tamo-guṇa*. And pure means above that. No contamination.

Take this direct process, because in this age it is very difficult to go step by step. Life is very short. You do not know if it will end at any moment. The material world is full of danger, especially in this age.

prāyeṇālpāyuṣaḥ sabhya
kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ
mandāḥ sumanda-matayo
manda-bhāgyā hy upadrutāḥ

"O learned one, in this iron age of Kali men almost always have but short lives. They are quarrelsome, lazy, misguided, unlucky and, above all, always disturbed." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.10) This is our position. Almost every one of us has a very short duration of life. Although in this age the standard of life should be one hundred years, we may believe it is reducing. On account of sinful activities, the duration of life is reducing, memory is reducing. Therefore, the short-cut policy to make our life successful, as Caitanya Mahāprabhu has introduced, is *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of Kṛṣṇa's holy names. *Śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* will give you life.

Those who are going to be initiated must avoid the ten kinds of offenses. Then the pure name will be manifested and you will try to chant more and more and more. This is the effect.

Unnecessary Desire

We want peace and prosperity because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is full of prosperity. And why should we not be in prosperity? We are not in prosperity because of our material contamination. *Kāma-lobhādayaḥ*: material contamination means being unnecessarily lusty. But if you practice, this unnecessary desire for sense gratification will be reduced. As you advance in devotional life, you will become uninterested in material activities, practically no interest. That is the test.

Śrīla Yāmunācārya says,

yad-avadhi mama cetaḥ
kṛṣṇa-pādāravinde
nava-nava-rasa-dhāmany udyataṁ
rantum āsīt
tad-avadhi bata nārī-saṅgame
smaryamāne
bhavati mukha-vikāraḥ suṣṭhu
niṣṭhīvanaṁ ca

"Since I have been engaged in the transcendental loving service of Kṛṣṇa, realizing ever-new pleasure in Him, whenever I think of sex pleasure, I spit at the thought, and my lips curl with distaste." Here in the material world the highest pleasure is sex. Everyone – not only in human society, but in dog society, cat society, bird society – they are all after sex. The most abominable happiness is the first-class happiness in the material world. Yāmunācārya was a king. So he says from his practical experience, "Since I have engaged my mind on the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa and am tasting newer and newer transcendental mellows that are increasing at every moment,

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch**, **jh**, and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh**. So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

when I think of sex life with women, immediately I spit at the thought." This is the test. The more you advance in Kṛṣṇa life, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the more you forget sex life, the topmost pleasure of material life. That is the test.

Sex life, or *kāma*, is passion, *rajas*. Here it is said, *tadā rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ*: the result of passion is sex, *kāma*, and *lobha*, no satisfaction. Spiritual life is above all these things. You cannot say that you have all the qualities of *rajas-tamo-bhāvāḥ* – lusty desires, greediness – and still you are advancing. That is debauchery. That is not spiritual life. The test of spiritual life is that you shall be situated in *sattva-guṇa*.

You have seen the picture of Cupid. He has an arrow to pierce you. Therefore this word is used: *anāvid-dham* – "without being pierced." As soon as you are pierced by an arrow, the painful condition begins. Immediately. We are always in pain because our heart is pierced by the arrow of Cupid. But if you remain in the *sattva-guṇa*, in goodness, then your heart will not be pierced by the arrow of Cupid. This is the test. Then you will be happy.

Thank you very much.

David Crick

HARE KṚṢṆA, HARE KṚṢṆA
KṚṢṆA KṚṢṆA, HARE HARE
HARE RĀMA, HARE RĀMA
RĀMA RĀMA, HARE HARE
PRONUNCIATION:
ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with "drama"). To hear Śrīla Prabhupāda chanting, go to krishna.com/hare-krishna-maha-mantra.

CALENDAR

This calendar is calculated for Mayapur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to ***www.vaisnavacalendar.com.***

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

Month of Mādhava
(*January 3 – 31*)

JANUARY

6 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

7 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jayadeva Gosvāmī, a great spiritual master and author of *Gīta-govinda.*

8 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Locana Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee of Kṛṣṇa known for his Bengali devotional songs.

13 – Pakṣa-vardhinī Mahā-Dvādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans for Ṣaṭ-tilā Ekādaśī.

22 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, one of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master and author who appeared in the 17th century. Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī, the consort of Lord Caitanya.

24 – Appearance anniversary of Śrī Advaita Ācārya, an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's expansion Mahā-Viṣṇu and a close associate of Lord Caitanya. Fasting till noon.

26 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīpāda Madhvācārya, a Vaiṣṇava philosopher and spiritual master who appeared in the 13th century.

27 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rāmānujācārya, an 11th-century philosopher and spiritual master.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

28 – Bhaimī Ekādaśī
Trispṛśā Mahā-Dvādaśī. Fasting from grains and beans. Fasting till noon for the appearance day of Lord Varāha and Lord Nityānanda tomorrow. Feast tomorrow.

29 – Appearance of Lord Varāha, Lord Kṛṣṇa's boar incarnation. Appearance anniversary of Lord Nityānanda Prabhu, a close associate of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu and an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa's elder brother, Lord Balarāma.

31 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a spiritual master in line from Lord Caitanya who composed many devotional songs in Bengali.

Month of Govinda
(*February 1 – March 2*)

FEBRUARY

5 – Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, the spiritual master of Śrīla A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, then feasting. Also, anniversary of the founding of *Back to Godhead* in 1944.

11 – Vijayā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

12 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Īśvara Purī, Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

14 – Śrī Śiva Rātri, a day in honor of Lord Śiva.

16 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī, the great devotee in the disciplic line from Lord Caitanya who confirmed Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's discovery of Lord Caitanya's birthplace.

26 – Amalakī-vrata Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

27 – Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, the spiritual master of Lord Caitanya's spiritual master.

MARCH

2 – Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā, the appearance anniversary of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Kṛṣṇa Himself in the role of His own devotee. Fasting till moonrise.

BOOK EXCERPT

O Mind!

by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī

— WITH COMMENTARIES —

Excerpted from the two-volume *Śrī Mahaḥ-śikṣā: Splendid Instructions to the Mind*, by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī, with the commentaries *Bhajana-darpaṇa* and *Manaḥ-śikṣā Bhāṣā* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and commentaries of contemporary Vaiṣṇavas. Copyright 2016 by Padma Inc. Available from the Krishna.com Store, Amazon.com, and elsewhere.

Painting by Jñānāñjana Dāsa

In Verse 1 of Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā *we are instructed to love Vṛndāvana and its residents. This painting is of Nandagrāma, the area of Vṛndāvana where Kṛṣṇa lives with His family. The painting is based on* Ānanda-vṛndāvana-campū *of Kavi Karṇapura, chapter one.*

ABOUT THE BOOK AND THIS EXCERPT:

In its twelve verses, Śrī Manaḥ-śiksā *presents a procedure for one to enter into and become absorbed in the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. It is intended especially for dedicated students seriously practicing* bhakti-yoga *and aspiring for advanced levels of devotion.*

This edition consists of two volumes. Volume 1 (59 pages) presents each verse in the format familiar to readers of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, along with a full-page original color painting for each verse and an explanation of each painting.

Volume 2 (537 pages) has four parts: Summaries and Background, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Commentaries, Commentaries by Contemporary Vaiṣṇavas, and Appendices.

For this excerpt, we are presenting Verse One (without the Sanskrit-English synonyms), along with Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's commentaries and a few paragraphs from each of the commentaries of contemporary Vaiṣṇavas.

Verse One

gurau goṣṭhe goṣṭhālayiṣu sujane bhū-sura-gaṇe
sva-mantre śrī-nāmni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇe
sadā dambhaṁ hitvā kuru ratim apūrvām atitarāṁ
aye svāntar bhrātaś caṭubhir abhiyāce dhṛta-padaḥ[1]

"O dear brother! O mind! Having given up all pride, please develop unprecedented and excessive attachment to Śrī Guru; to Śrī Vṛndāvana, the abode of cows; to the devotee residents of Vṛndāvana; to all the devotees on this planet; to the confidential mantra [given by Śrī Guru]; to the holy names of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; and to the process of surrendering to the fresh youthful couple of Vraja. Holding your feet, I beseech you with sweet words."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Bhajana-Darpaṇa* Commentary

Ślokārtha: Meaning of the Verse

1 – Śrī Guru
Guru includes both *dīkṣā-guru* and *śikṣā-gurus* (initiating guru and instructing gurus). The types of attachment one should develop towards the gurus while serving them is clearly explained in the next verse (*Manaḥ-śikṣā* 2).

2 – Goṣṭha: Śrī Vraja-dhāma
This includes Gokula, Nandīśvara, Govardhana, Śyāma-kuṇḍa, Yāvat and all other places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in *vraja-maṇḍala*.

3 – Goṣṭhālayin: The residents of Vraja
Those who reside in *Vraja-dhāma* for the purpose of pleasing the Lord through devotional service are called *vraja-vāsī-gaṇa*. Vrajavāsī indicates a pure devotee, an elevated *uttama-bhāgavata*. Such a person resides in *vraja-dhāma*, both physically and in mediation, or just in meditation.

4 – Sujana: The Vaiṣṇavas,[2] devotees of the Lord
Vaiṣṇavas may belong to any Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* (school). Perhaps they may not reside in *vraja-dhāma* even in meditation, but still they are bona-fide and are devotees of the Supreme Lord, Bhagavān. These are the intermediate, *madhyama-bhāgavata*, devotees.

5 – Bhū-sura-gaṇa: The brāhmaṇas
These are persons who are teachers, priests, intellectuals, scholars, counselors, or healers, and who are firmly fixed in the scriptural duties for their occupation and life stages, *varṇāśrama-dharma*. Such persons also teach the worship of the Lord, *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, to all pious persons, *varṇāśrama* followers. They are known as juniors, or *kaniṣṭha-bhāgavata*.

6 – Sva-mantra: One's dīkṣā-mantra
This is the spiritual mantra, or *bhagavan-mantra,* that a bonafide guru gives as part of initiation (e.g., *kāma-gāyatrī*).

7 – Śrī Hari-nāma
Primary names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead in relation to the spiritual world and the spiritual eternal function are names like Śrī Hari, Śrī Rādhā-Kānta, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Govinda, and so forth. Secondary names, such as Patita-pāvana (the deliverer of all fallen souls) and Paramātmā (Supersoul), are related only to the material world. One should always take shelter of the Lord's primary names.

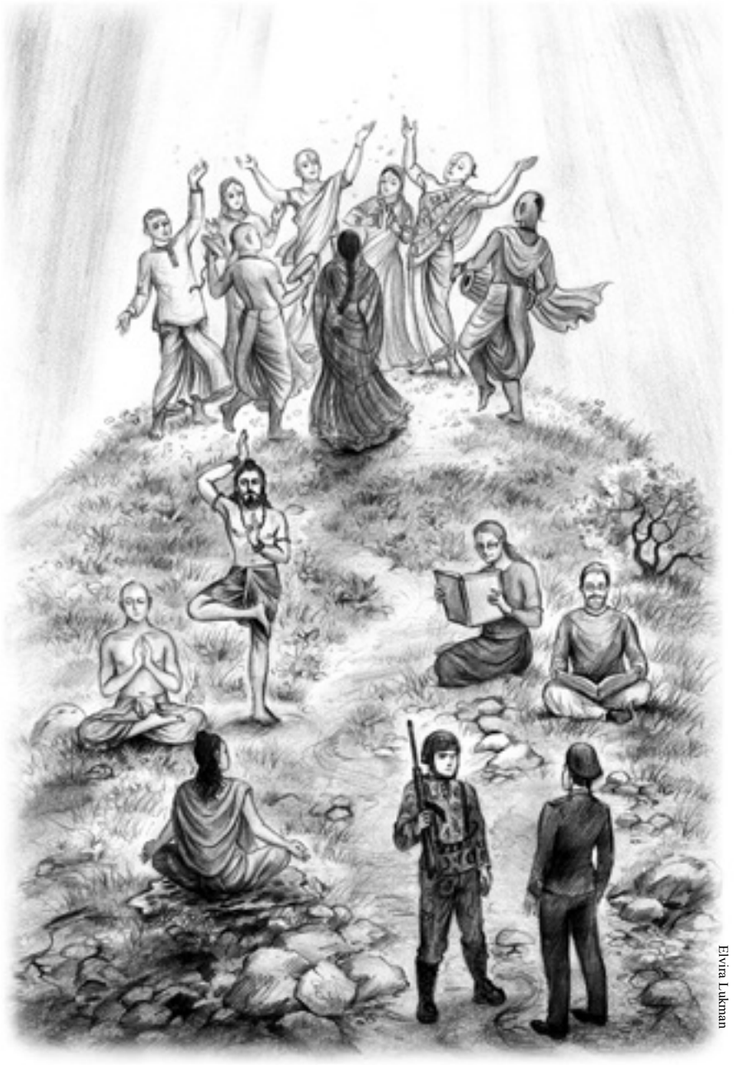
Dinara Lukman

Have exclusive and one-pointed devotion to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's feet, considering them as dear as life.

8 – Vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇa: Surrender to the youthful divine couple of Vraja
One should take shelter exclusively and one-pointedly of *vraja-yuvā*, the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

9 – Dambhaṁ hitvā: Give up pride
The varieties of *dambha* include *māyā* (illusion and trickery), *avidyā* (ignorance), *kapaṭatā* (cheating), *asaralatā* (lack of direct simplicity) and *śāṭhya* (deceit and duplicity). While cultivating pure devotional service, if there is any other motive besides progression in *bhakti*, then one is engaged in a kind of cheating or duplicity. If philosophical detachment (*jñāna*) or good works for material enjoyment (*karma*) is prominent in the devotional process, then ignorance (*avidyā*) will be seen as more powerful than *bhakti*. If any unfavorable mood is present in the development of *bhakti*, it is a disguised form of *māyā*. One must give up all such things. When one engages in the cultivation of pure devotional service, illusions about duties of occupation and stage of life (*varṇāśrama-dharma*), material desires, the self, God, material energy, life's goal, and the process of success will all disappear.

10 – Apūrvā-rati
The love inherent in the soul is pure love for the Lord (*ātma-rati* is *śuddha-rati*). When that pure love in the conditioned soul comes into contact with the dull matter of *māyā*, it transforms into material attachment. In pure *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, the original, eternal, deeply emotional attachment remains fixed and visible at all times because Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the soul of all souls. During conditioned life, while performing devotional service, a soul becomes filled with *apūrvā-rati*, love that has no material precedent, in proportion to the expression of the soul's inherent emotional attachment.



Elvira Lukman

Devotees of Kṛṣṇa rise above worldly dualities, speculative knowledge, and mystic yoga.

11–Atitarāṁ kuru: Make intensive endeavor (atiśaya-vidhāna)
Enthusiastically feel encouraged to progress and take full shelter in the devotional path. Do not become complacent, thinking, "If I am lucky I will get spiritual success, or, if it is not in my fortune, then I may not achieve it." As much as the mercy of guru and Kṛṣṇa combine with one's own endeavors, one gets spiritual potency. As much as that spiritual potency manifests, one's desires to enjoy the fruits of one's own actions will be diminished.

Instructive Commentary

To be eligibile to receive the pure instructions in this verse, a person should already have achieved faith, *śraddhā*, in the path of loving devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Such faith comes from the potency of the association of saintly persons, *sādhu-saṅga*, manifesting within the heart. That

Elvira Lukman

*Have attachment to intermediate (*madhyama*) devotees of any genuine tradition whether or not they reside in Vraja in body or mind.*

potency diminishes the tendency to perform *karma*, actions for material gain. When *śraddhā* develops, the first action is to accept and take shelter of an initiating spiritual master, *dīkṣā-guru*, as well as the *dīkṣā-mantra* to worship *yugala-kiśora*, the divine couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. After receiving the mantra one should worship one's *śikṣā-* and *dīkṣā-gurus* with pure devotion and attachment to their lotus feet (*ātma-rati*). One should not only respect gurus as saints, using rational intelligence, but one should also deal with one's gurus as well-wishing friends. Always respect and serve the three types of Vaiṣṇavas [junior, intermediate, and advanced] according to their eligibility, with love and in a friendly manner. One should also develop deep attachment to chanting the mantras and serving the holy name. One should come to the point of complete surrender to the lotus feet of the divine couple, knowing them to be one's life and soul. This surrender is called *śaraṇāgati*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Manaḥ-śikṣā Bhāṣā*, Song One[3]

[O mind,] desire to serve the young couple of Vraja with uncommon, wonderful attachment. Gurudeva, the forest of Vraja, the residents of Vraja, the pure devotees and the *brāhmaṇas*, your *iṣṭa-mantra* and the holy name – O heart! I beg you, falling at your feet, please love all of them. I know the essence – without devotion for all these, along with devotion for Kṛṣṇa, the soul will not escape the cycle of birth and death (*saṁsāra*). Consider that action, knowledge, asceticism, and yoga only further bind one to *karma* and certainly are unable to free one from it. Renounce all these, O brother, and sing the praise of the goddess of faith, whose grace can bestow devotion. Give up all pretenses and meditate on the eightfold truths (guru, Vṛndāvana, Vṛndāvana's residents, Vaiṣṇavas, *brāhmaṇas*, one's mantra, the holy name, and the process of surrendering) at every moment. Love them all without ulterior motives. With prayers for attaining such love, Bhaktivinoda bows at the lotus feet of Śrī Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī.

Commentaries of Contemporary Vaiṣṇavas

Śivarāma Swami

This verse can be understood in depth by analyzing Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's words. Firstly, there are four specific questions being answered, so we will address those in summary.

The first question has been asked, what is someone's duty? The word *śaraṇe* answers the second question of what a devotee's duty is when his faith awakens in hearing about Lord Kṛṣṇa. One should take shelter in Kṛṣṇa, *mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*. The ultimate duty of every living entity, every conditioned soul, is to take shelter of Kṛṣṇa. The natural question that arises is, "How do I do that? And what is the method for taking shelter, or what is the practical process?" And the answer is, by developing love for Kṛṣṇa. Taking shelter means that Kṛṣṇa gives us his shelter. But we cannot get Kṛṣṇa's shelter unless we actually have *rati*. This word *rati* is a very nice word, a common word which has multiple meanings and usage. So here *rati* means that one has love of Kṛṣṇa (*prema*). When we have love for Kṛṣṇa then we can receive his shelter. It is something that we have to acquire, that Kṛṣṇa gives. It is not something that we can simply manipulate or achieve by some certain ritualistic or regulated activity.

The third question is how to develop this love. And the fourth: is this love developed exclusively for Kṛṣṇa? No, it is not. Rather, it is stated: gurus, Vraja, Vṛndāvana, *vraja-vāsīs*, the holy name, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. We cannot exclude anyone from the realm of our attachment. If one loves one's father, then one will also love one's mother, brothers, sisters, household – everything else is automatically included. Therefore a devotee is equally disposed, or even more favorably disposed, towards those things that are *tadīya*, related to the Lord, because they are an easier way of achieving Kṛṣṇa.

So one may ask, how will I develop love for all of these devotees? And here it is stated, *dambhaṁ hitvā*: get rid of your pride.

Śacīnandana Swami

There is a ladder in our lives. We can go down in the direction of *kāma*, become degraded, sad, disappointed, frustrated, and keep taking birth after birth, or we can go to the same ladder of desire, but go up to the level of love, to the beginning states of gratitude or appreciation of Kṛṣṇa, feeling closeness to the Lord. Then we feel some *bhakti*, and finally some spiritual energy will really start working intensely in us, and then there will be *ruci* and *āsakti* and *bhāva* someday. But we can start now, and it's only a matter of which direction we look.

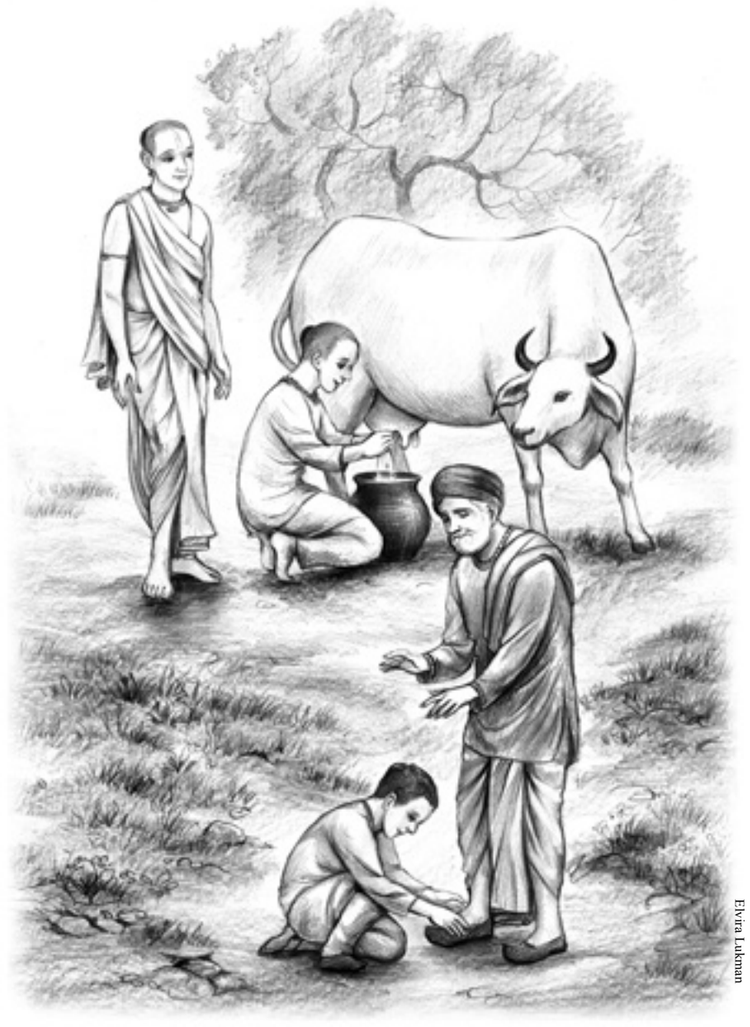
Do we want to look toward the material energy, or do we want to look toward guru, toward *vraja-dhāma*, toward the *brāhmaṇas*, toward the Vaiṣṇavas, and all these personalities we have heard about in *Manaḥ-śikṣā*? Train the mind to look to these residents of Vraja, the Vaiṣṇavas, and to our *dīkṣā-mantras*, the holy name, and we will see, without any doubt, that we will become free from this *kāma*, this selfish desire that only makes us miserable and disappointed.

When in the association of devotees, something happens. A *sādhu* is someone who practices *bhajana* and who helps us to do *bhajana* also. So when we come together with proper devotees who practice Kṛṣṇa consciousness and who will preach to us nicely, I can guarantee we will faint when we smell the fragrance of the cup full of honey that will be opened in their association. In the association of materialists our heads turn downwards, and down we go. In the association of *sādhus* our heads turn upwards and up we go. It is that simple.

Bhaktivijñāna Goswami

Certainly, externally we must be humble. Externally, we should try and offer respect to one and all, not expecting it in return. Externally, we should chant the holy name, but *bhakti* is not a mechanical process. We need to think what should be occurring in our hearts. That science is what Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī explains in the *Manaḥ-śikṣā*.

In this first instruction, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says, "O my brother, my dear mind, I'm



Elvira Lukman

Have attachment to beginners in devotion, such as brāhmaṇas *who follow and teach dedication of life and occupation to God (*varṇāśrama*).*

Elvira Lukman

Cultivate loving attachment to one's dīkṣā-guru *and* śikṣā-gurus *as friends, not just saints.*

offering my obeisances to you; I'm taking a very humble position. I'm taking hold of your feet and I humbly pray to you. Please, give up all your pride: *sadā dambhaṁ hitvā*."

He then says, "I pray to you, 'O mind, try your hardest to develop attachment.'" The reason for this instruction is contained in the first two lines where he enumerates to whom and to what we should develop our attachment. *Gurau* to Śrī Guru, *goṣṭha* – Vṛndāvana, *goṣṭhālayiṣu* – to the residents of Vṛndāvana. *Sujane* means devotees. *Bhū-sura-gaṇe* means *brāhmaṇas*. *Sva-mantre* means in our own *dīkṣā-mantras*. *Śrī-nāmni* – the holy name. *Vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-śaraṇe* – the shelter of the lotus feet of Kiśora-kiśorī.

Each word or phrase carries an important message, which helps us to have a clearer idea of how we should chant the holy name and perform devotional service.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī

In his book *Jaiva-dharma*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes, "*Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā* has laid down a systematic procedure (*paddhati*) for one to enter into and become absorbed in the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa; one should follow it without guile." A *paddhati* is a kind of instruction manual.

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī joins together the concepts of having great love for others with giving up our inner pride. If we explore that relationship, we will find that love and humility must go together. Even in ordinary life, when we are convinced that we are great and so deserve to have others serve us, we can neither serve them selflessly nor appreciate and value the service they do for us. Thus, the essence of love – being fascinated by the beloved, valuing the beloved, and caring for the beloved – cannot happen authentically in the presence of pride. Certainly in the spiritual realm, *saprema-bhakteḥ paramānukūlaṁ dainyaṁ mahā-puṣṭi-karam* (*Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 3.5.74), utter humility nourishes pure love.

We should especially note that we are told in verse one to have great love for our gurus, the spiritual masters who show us the path, instruct us, and initiate us into the chanting of mantras. Kṛṣṇa tells us in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that we must serve a guru to receive transcendental knowledge. Such service, however, is not merely official, nor in the mood of an employee. As Śrīla Prabhupāda explains in his purport to *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā* 17.15: "The words *snigdha* (very peaceful) and *su-snigdha* (affectionate) are used in verses fourteen and fifteen respectively, and they are also found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.8): *brūyuḥ snigdhasya śiṣyasya guravo guhyam apy uta*. 'A disciple who has actual love for his spiritual master is endowed, by the blessings of the spiritual master, with all confidential knowledge.' Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī has commented that the word *snigdhasya* means *prema-vataḥ*. The word *prema-vataḥ* indicates that one has great love for his spiritual master." Thus the exchange of service and knowledge between guru and disciple is that of love.

NOTES

1. The meter for the verses of *Manaḥ-śikṣā* is *śikhariṇī*, like that of *Jagannāthāṣṭakam*, found in ISKCON songbooks.
2. Some people say that Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī has placed *sujana* (Vaiṣṇavas) and *bhū-sura-gaṇa* (*brāhmaṇas*) in two separate categories to show that a Vaiṣṇava is not automatically a *brāhmaṇa*. However, if the term *bhū-sura-gaṇe* is taken as an adjective of the term *sujane*, then it will translate as "to all the Vaiṣṇavas, who are also *brāhmaṇas*."
3. The Bengali verses of the song appear in the book.

About the Author and the Commentators

These short biographies are abridged from longer versions that appear in the book along with entries for Jayādvaita Swami (commentator), Hari Pārṣada Dāsa (Sanskrit translator), Kṛṣṇa-abhiṣeka Dāsa (Bengali translator), and Prāṇa Govinda Dāsa (Bengali translator).

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī (1495–1586) was born in Bengal to a family of very wealthy landowners, but at the age of nineteen he left his family and traveled to Jagannātha Purī to take shelter of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After the Lord left this world, Raghunātha Dāsa went to Vṛndāvana and received instructions from Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī. He lived near Rādhā-kuṇḍa for the rest of his life. He worked to find and restore places of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in the area and wrote and compiled many important books.

Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1838–1914) grew up in Bengal and first worked as an educator and introduced English education to the state of Orissa. Later, he was a magistrate during British rule. When he lived in Jagannātha Purī with his wife and children, he supervised the temple on the government's request. He had fourteen children, all of whom were advanced Vaiṣṇavas. One of his sons, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī, founded the Gauḍīya Maṭha and was the spiritual master of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Śivarāma Swami was born in Budapest, Hungary. His family emigrated to Canada, and in 1973 he became Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciple. He accepted the renounced order of life in 1979. He became a member of ISKCON's governing body (GBC) in 1986 while serving in the UK and later became the GBC representative for Hungary. Well known for his scholarship, he has taught many courses and written many books on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava theology and philosophy.

Śacīnandana Swami, of German origin, joined ISKCON in 1970 and was initiated by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda in 1971. He teaches and writes prolifically on Vaiṣṇavism and the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement and has translated the *Bhagavad-gītā* into German.

Bhaktivijñāna Goswami was born in Tashkent, in the former Soviet Union. He took to spiritual life in 1980 – as a scientist, a Moscow State University graduate and a postgraduate student at the Institute of Molecular Biology. He is a disciple of Rādhānāth Swami and is well known for his Sanskrit and śāstric scholarship.

Ūrmilā Devī Dāsī, born in America, has served ISKCON since her initiation by Śrīla Prabhupāda in 1973. She has a PhD in education and is the chair of the Sastric Advisory Council to the GBC, an associate editor of *Back to Godhead*, and a professor of Sociology of Religion at Bhaktivedanta College in Belgium. She is the author of *Vaikuṇṭha Children*, *Dr. Best Learn to Read* (an 83-book literacy program), *The Great Mantra for Mystic Meditation*, and numerous articles.

Jñānāñjana Dāsa, born in Italy, is one of the founders of the International Vedic Art Academy at Villa Vrindavan, Florence, Italy. Some of his paintings have been published in books of the Bhaktivedanta Book Trust. He also does mixed-media art, paints frescoes and murals, and does conservation work on art of the Old Masters. He created twenty-two large paintings based on the *Mahābhārata* that are displayed at the Museum of Sacred Art at Villa Vrindavan.

In Excess Of Our Quota

Though Lord Kṛṣṇa is supplying all our needs, for our benefit He may choose to sometimes restrict the supply.

by Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī

EVERY LIVING BEING requires air to breathe, water to drink, food to eat, a place to live, and some work or activity. Any restriction on these for us is sure to raise our eyebrows, if not our anger.

If that were not enough, we feel pinched even when we get less than what we're accustomed to. One person lives in a mansion, drives a fine car, and eats at a dozen restaurants. Another lives in a hut, keeps a few animals, and feels proud of his stock of grains and potatoes. No matter what providence has allowed for them, neither wants to be limited to less.

The experience of restriction is relative to conditioned expectations. While one person accepts the conditions of a life of constant restriction, another expects or demands abundance. Still, no one's wealth can guarantee happiness and good health.

Why does restriction gnaw at us, and what is the solution? The succinct instructions of *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* and *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* are torchlights to illuminate the complicated matrix of needs and wants in our world of modern material accoutrements.

Why Restriction?

> The Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the Complete Whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the Complete Whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance. (*Śrī Īśopaniṣad,* Invocation)

Every emanation from Kṛṣṇa is a complete unit, and each of us, as pure spiritual beings, lacks nothing for our existence. So how do perfectly equipped complete units experience restriction? When the soul ignores the Personality of Godhead, restriction begins. Our own minute completeness faces limitation the moment we disassociate ourselves from the Supreme. Our full potential for bliss, knowledge, and eternal existence is put on hold.

Consider the example of fire and sparks. Sparks sometimes jump out of a fire, fall through the air, and become extinguished. Similarly, we fall into restriction when we disassociate ourselves from the greatest source of fire and light, the original source of everything that exists. Restriction of God's resources comes from our being distanced from Him, but Kṛṣṇa, our ever well-wisher, sends us a quota for living a balanced, happy life.

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Our Natural Quota

In his commentary on *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* Śrīla Prabhupāda gives lucid examples from nature to illustrate "quota." The cow gives her milk and does not drink any. All she wants is some grass and a place to stand. She's content to accept that as her quota. Another animal, the tiger, never hunts for wheat, rice, or cow's milk because its quota is flesh. All animals live in strict adherence to the laws of nature. Human beings must also adhere to a certain natural quota. In *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* (verse 2, purport) Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

> According to nature's arrangement, living entities lower on the evolutionary scale do not eat or collect more than necessary. Consequently in the animal kingdom there is generally no economic problem or scarcity of necessities. If a bag of rice is placed in a public place, birds will come to eat a few grains and go away. A human being, however, will take away the whole bag. He will eat all his stomach can hold and then try to keep the rest in storage. According to scriptures, this collecting of more than necessary (*atyāhāra*) is prohibited. Now the entire world is suffering because of it.

The complete whole Personality of Godhead reveals how the earth's bounty is meant for the complete benefit of mankind.

Only a human being has the freedom to choose to either transgress the laws of nature or dutifully respect them in submission to the Supreme. Kṛṣṇa has created laws that govern human life, and we must use our intelligence to understand them. In the context of quota, we must ask ourselves, "Exactly how am I implicated in *atyāhāra* (collecting more than I need) and *prayāsa* (endeavoring for needless things)?" We can become aware of our needless toil and exploits and inquire about how to transcend them. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "If our endeavor (*prayāsa*) is not to inquire about the Absolute Truth, we will simply endeavor to satisfy our artificial needs. A spiritual aspirant should avoid mundane endeavor." (*Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* 2, Purport)

We all require positive engagement to earn our livelihood, to be responsible toward our family members and society. Responsible action is a requirement of every human being. For the spiritual aspirant, whatever one's occupation, the guide in this regard is the *īśāvāsya* principle.

The Īśāvāsya Principle

Disparity was felt between the communists and the capitalists during the last century. Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions them in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* as examples of the weakness of political ideologies that fall short of sound spiritual insight. The communists wanted to nationalize the wealth of the citizens, while the capitalists encouraged the people in economic development. This led to quibbling over how wealth should be utilized, the cold war, and the arms race (which is still running). Only in a God-centered society can people peacefully agree on who is the ultimate source – and thus the owner – of all wealth, who it should be used for, and how. Śrīla Prabhupāda called this the *īśāvāsya* principle. As *Śrī Īśopaniṣad* (Mantra 1) states: "Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong."

As Prabhupāda gave the example of the communists and the capitalists, I would like to present two modern conflicted sections of society – namely, the environmentalists and the industrialists. Like the communists and the capitalists, both groups engage themselves in *atyāhara,* over-collection, and *prayāsa*, over-endeavor. Industrialists serve mankind by combining natural resources with modern technology to produce a variety of desired products, and they glean excellent profit. Environmentalists devise research, projects, and complex legislations to curb human exploitation of the natural environment and protect nature. One party is a clever exploiter of natural resources, the other an indignant rescuer of natural resources. On both sides there is the ardent desire to use for their own purposes what God intends to be used for everyone's welfare. No workable agreement is foreseeable.

However well meaning or not well meaning they may be, when people take more interest in the material side of life, forgetting their real interest of self-realization, they are misdirected. They only quibble and quarrel. Like every unit that emanates from the Lord, the earth planet is a complete arrangement, as we read in *Śrī Īśopaniṣad*. The complete whole Personality of Godhead reveals how the earth's bounty is meant for the complete benefit of mankind. Our proper use of the vast, opulent expanse of our planet's resources depends on our relationship with the one who entrusted it to our care.

The Supreme Supplier

While materialists take more interest in the material way of life, devotees of Kṛṣṇa take interest in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. A pure devotee accepts supply and restriction as the expression of Kṛṣṇa's love. Prabhupāda writes in *Light of the Bhāgavata* (verse 3, purport):

> We should always know that God is ever kind to us. Despite our gross disobedience to the laws of God's nature, the Lord is kind enough to look after our maintenance. The Lord distributes His mercy in the form of rains on the scorched earth at times of dire necessity. . . . He supplies rain when we are practically on the verge of death for want of water. God is merciful undoubtedly, but He bestows His mercy on us when we need it most. This is so because we forget God as soon as we obtain this mercy. We should therefore remember the mercy of God constantly if we want to avoid distress. We are eternally related with Him, despite the state of forgetfulness already described above. *Bhagavad-gītā* confirms that the laws of nature are stringent because they are conducted by three different modes. But one who surrenders unto the Lord overcomes the stringency of nature easily.

Sometimes we face famine; sometimes nature lavishes us with rich bounty. Sometimes years of drought occur; sometimes springs pour out of mountains, yielding millions of tons of clear water. Sometimes scarcity occurs, such as when mercantile men stock grains to sell at their whim; at other times the same men cannot manage the surplus.

Śrīla Prabhupāda spoke of how, despite artificial inflation, Kṛṣṇa continues to maintain us.

> From my own experience I have seen when first-class rice was selling at 8 np* per kg, and now that is being sold at 8 rupees. That means it is 64 times higher, but still people are eating, and the man who lives in care of the footpath, he is also eating. So the man in the footpath, and the man on the thirtieth floor of the skyscraper, they are living, and still the inflation is going on. Man-made laws cannot work any rupture in Krishna's plan. Better let

*From 1957 to 1964, the Indian paisa (one-hundredth of a rupee) was called *naya paisa* (new paisa, or np).

HELP ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF *BACK TO GODHEAD*

On the order of his guru to teach Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the English-speaking world, Śrīla Prabhupāda started *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1944. Over seventy years later, *Back to Godhead* is still a vital tool to introduce people to Lord Kṛṣṇa's valuable teachings and to nurture the spiritual life of people already familiar with those teachings. Unsold copies of BTG accumulate over time, and we now have around 5,000 magazines, going back about five years. We feel it's a shame for those magazines to lie in our warehouse rather than in the hands of people who can benefit from everything Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to offer. To encourage you to help us distribute these leftover magazines, we're offering past issues at drastically reduced prices:

Orders of 10–50: $1.00 each, 51–500: $0.75 each, 500+: $0.60 each. (Shipping costs are extra.)

To order, contact the Krishna.com Store and let one of our customer service representatives know you're interested in the "BTG Warehouse Clearance Sale." Because our inventory includes a variety of different issues in various quantities, and because different issues may be mixed together in one carton, we are unable to fill requests for specific issues. We will send you only issues that are currently available and of our own choosing.

> us remain now under Krishna's shelter fully dependent, and we shall remain unaffected by all the man-made difficulties. (Letter, December 1, 1974)

Devotees are in the know because of a devotional-service connection to the supreme supplier. They know that restriction does not occur in the abode of the supplier. Economic development is not required there. The trees there are pure devotees and, of course, are never cut down. If they wish to, they can move from one place to another to better serve Kṛṣṇa. Every entity there has only Kṛṣṇa as its sublime interest, and its needs and desires are fulfilled by perfect spiritual service to the ever-blissful Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. For example, "The cows that followed the Lord within the forest moved slowly because of their heavy, milk-laden udders. But when the Lord called them by their specific names they at once became alert, and as they hastened toward Him their milk bags overflowed and poured milk on the ground because of affection for the Lord." (*Light of the Bhāgavata,* verse 23)

In the abode of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa no restriction awaits us. The residents there are greatly satisfied to please Him, and any apparent want or lack on their part only serves to sweeten their exchanges of love with Him. The only "lack" they feel is the desire for more service. In Kṛṣṇa's world there are no conflicts of interest; every interest melts in the harmony of pleasing the Lord. Every tree can fulfill any desire of the residents to serve the Lord. When we enter that realm, our need to be wanted and loved and to offer our service to others is fulfilled by the overflow of pure, unadulterated love in that abode of the affectionate supreme supplier.

Understanding information about the supreme abode is essential for understanding our duty on this planet. Unless the attitude of loving service to Kṛṣṇa is revived, the frenzied pace of *atyāhāra* and *prayāsa* will only serve to further deprave mankind. Kṛṣṇa has given us each a quota, and exceeding that will not give us the precious love that is what we are actually hankering for. No wonder we feel restriction. In the words of Śrīla Prabhupāda in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*, "a spiritual aspirant should avoid mundane endeavor."

Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, serves the deities at ISKCON Los Angeles, where she joined ISKCON in 1979. She lives with her husband and daughter.

A Pause for Prayer

Painting by Muralīdhara Dāsa

Dear Lord, You relieve all kinds of material distress. Your magnanimous transcendental qualities and holy name are all-auspicious. This conclusion is already settled. You can go faster than the speed of mind and words. You cannot be perceived by material senses. We therefore offer You respectful obeisances again and again.

Dear Lord, we beg to offer our obeisances unto You. When the mind is fixed upon You, the world of duality, although a place for material enjoyment, appears meaningless. Your transcendental form is full of transcendental bliss. We therefore offer our respects unto You. Your appearances as Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu, and Lord Śiva are meant for the purpose of creating, maintaining and annihilating this cosmic manifestation.

Dear Lord, we offer our respectful obeisances unto You because Your existence is completely independent of all material influences. Your Lordship always takes away the devotee's miserable conditions, for Your brain plans how to do so. You live everywhere as Paramātmā; therefore You are known as Vāsudeva. You also accept Vasudeva as Your father, and You are celebrated by the name Kṛṣṇa. You are so kind that You always increase the influence of all kinds of devotees.

– The Pracetās to Lord Viṣṇu, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.30.22–24

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

LORD BRAHMĀ APPEALS TO KING PṚTHU

To put an end to the competition between Lord Indra and King Pṛthu, Lord Brahmā requests Pṛthu to stop the sacrifice.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 19

33 नैवात्मने महेन्द्राय रोषमार्हतुमर्हसि
उभावपि हि भद्रं ते उत्तमश्लोकविग्रहौ

naivātmane mahendrāya
roṣam āhartum arhasi
ubhāv api hi bhadraṁ te
uttamaśloka-vigrahau

na – not; *eva* – certainly; *ātmane* – nondifferent from you; *mahā-indrāya* – upon the King of heaven, Indra; *roṣam* – anger; *āhartum* – to apply; *arhasi* – you ought; *ubhau* – both of you; *api* – certainly; *hi* – also; *bhadram* – good fortune; *te* – unto you; *uttama-śloka-vigrahau* – incarnations of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Lord Brahmā continued: Let there be good fortune to both of you, for you and King Indra are both part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore you should not be angry with King Indra, who is nondifferent from you.

34 मास्मिन्महाराज कृथाः स्म चिन्तां
निशामयास्मद्वच आदृतात्मा
यद्ध्यायतो दैवहतं नु कर्तुं
मनोऽतिरुष्टं विशते तमोऽन्धम्

māsmin mahārāja kṛthāḥ sma cintāṁ
niśāmayāsmad-vaca ādṛtātmā
yad dhyāyato daiva-hataṁ nu kartuṁ
mano 'tiruṣṭaṁ viśate tamo 'ndham

mā – do not; *asmin* – in this; *mahā-rāja* – O King; *kṛthāḥ* – do; *sma* – as done in the past; *cintām* – agitation of the mind; *niśāmaya* – please consider; *asmat* – my; *vacaḥ* – words; *ādṛta-ātmā* – being very respectful; *yat* – because; *dhyāyataḥ* – of him who is contemplating; *daiva-hatam* – that which is thwarted by providence; *nu* – certainly; *kartum* – to do; *manaḥ* – the mind; *ati-ruṣṭam* – very angry; *viśate* – enters; *tamaḥ* – darkness; *andham* – dense.

My dear King, do not be agitated and anxious because your sacrifices have not been properly executed due to providential impediments. Kindly take my words

with great respect. We should always remember that if something happens by providential arrangement, we should not be very sorry. The more we try to rectify such reversals, the more we enter into the darkest region of materialistic thought.

PURPORT: Sometimes the saintly or very religious person also has to meet with reversals in life. Such incidents should be taken as providential. 1 Although there may be sufficient cause for being unhappy, one should avoid counteracting such reversals, for the more we become implicated in rectifying such reversals, the more we enter into the darkest regions of material anxiety. Lord Kṛṣṇa has also advised us in this connection. We should tolerate things instead of becoming agitated.

35 क्रतुर्विरमतामेष देवेषु दुरवग्रहः
धर्मव्यतिकरो यत्र पाखण्डैरिन्द्रनिर्मितैः

kratur viramatām eṣa
deveṣu duravagrahaḥ
dharma-vyatikaro yatra
pākhaṇḍair indra-nirmitaiḥ

kratuḥ – the sacrifice; *viramatām* – let it stop; *eṣaḥ* – this; *deveṣu* – amongst the demigods; *duravagrahaḥ* – addiction to unwanted things; *dharma-vyatikaraḥ* – violation of religious principles; *yatra* – where; *pākhaṇḍaiḥ* – by sinful activities; *indra* – by the King of heaven; *nirmitaiḥ* – manufactured.

Lord Brahmā continued: Stop the performance of these sacrifices, for they have induced Indra to introduce so many irreligious aspects. You should know very well that even amongst the demigods there are many unwanted desires.

PURPORT: There are many competitors in ordinary business affairs, and the *karma-kāṇḍa* chapters of the *Vedas* sometimes cause competition and envy amongst *karmīs*. 2 A *karmī* must be envious because he wishes to enjoy material pleasures to their fullest extent. That is the material disease. Consequently there is always competition amongst *karmīs*, either in ordinary business affairs or in the performance of *yajña*.

3 Lord Brahmā's purpose was to end the competition between Lord Indra and Mahārāja Pṛthu. Because Mahārāja Pṛthu was a great devotee and incarnation of God, he was requested to stop the sacrifices so that Indra might not further introduce irreligious systems, which are always followed by criminal-minded people.

1) Why should we avoid counteracting reversals in life?
2) Why must a *karmī* be envious?
3) What was Lord Brahmā's purpose in instructing King Pṛthu?
4) Why did Lord Brahmā think it would be better for King Pṛthu to stop the sacrifice?
5) What did Lord Buddha have to do to introduce the religion of nonviolence?

36 एभिरिन्द्रोपसंसृष्टैः पाखण्डैर्हारिभिर्जनम्
ह्रियमाणं विचक्ष्वैनं यस्ते यज्ञध्रुगश्वमुट्

ebhir indropasaṁsṛṣṭaiḥ
pākhaṇḍair hāribhir janam
hriyamāṇaṁ vicakṣvainaṁ
yas te yajña-dhrug aśva-muṭ

ebhiḥ – by these; *indra-upasaṁsṛṣṭaiḥ* – created by the King of heaven, Indra; *pākhaṇḍaiḥ* – sinful activities; *hāribhiḥ* – very attractive to the heart; *janam* – the people in general; *hriyamāṇam* – being carried away; *vicakṣva* – just see; *enam* – these; *yaḥ* – one who; *te* – your; *yajña-dhruk* – creating a disturbance in the performance of the sacrifice; *aśva-muṭ* – who stole the horse.

Just see how Indra, the King of heaven, was creating a disturbance in the midst of the sacrifice by stealing the sacrificial horse. These attractive sinful activities he has introduced will be carried out by the people in general.

PURPORT: As stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.21):

yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas
tad tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute
lokas tad anuvartate

"Whatever action is performed by a great man, common men follow in his footsteps. And whatever standards he sets by exemplary acts, all the world pursues."

For his own sense gratification, King Indra thought to defeat Mahārāja Pṛthu in the performance of one hundred horse sacrifices. Consequently he stole the horse and hid himself amid so many irreligious personalities, taking on the false guise of a *sannyāsī*. Such activities are attractive to the people in general; therefore they are dangerous. 4 Lord Brahmā thought that instead of allowing Indra to further introduce such irreligious systems, it would be better to stop the sacrifice.

A similar stance was taken by Lord Buddha when people were overly engrossed in the animal sacrifices recommended by Vedic instructions. 5 Lord Buddha had to introduce the religion of nonviolence by contradicting the Vedic sacrificial instructions. Actually, in the sacrifices the slaughtered animals were given a new life, but people without such powers were taking advantage of such Vedic rituals and unnecessarily killing poor animals. Therefore Lord Buddha had to deny the authority of the *Vedas* for the time being. One should not perform sacrifices that will induce reversed orders. It is better to stop such sacrifices.

As we have repeatedly explained, due to a lack of qualified brahminical priests in Kali-yuga, it is not possible to perform the ritualistic ceremonies recommended in the *Vedas*. Consequently the *śāstras* instruct us to perform the *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. By the *saṅkīrtana* sacrifice, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in His form of Lord Caitanya, will be satisfied and worshiped. The entire purpose of performing sacrifices is to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Viṣṇu. 6 Lord Viṣṇu, or Lord Kṛṣṇa, is present in His form of Lord Caitanya; therefore people who are intelligent should try to satisfy Him by performing *saṅkīrtana-yajña*. This is the easiest way to satisfy Lord Viṣṇu in this age.

People should take advantage of the injunctions in different *śāstras* concerning sacrifices in this age and not create unnecessary disturbances during the sinful age of Kali. In Kali-yuga men all over the world are very expert in opening slaughterhouses for killing animals, which they eat. 7 If the old ritualistic ceremonies were observed, people would be encouraged to kill more and more animals. In Calcutta there are many butcher shops which keep a deity of the goddess Kālī, and animal-eaters think it proper to purchase animal flesh from such shops in hope that they are eating the remnants of food offered to goddess Kālī. 8 They do not know that goddess Kālī never accepts nonvegetarian food because she is the chaste wife of Lord Śiva. Lord Śiva is also a great Vaiṣṇava and never eats nonvegetarian food, and the goddess Kālī accepts the remnants of food left by Lord Śiva. Therefore there is no possibility of her eating flesh or fish. 9 Such offerings are accepted by the associates of goddess Kālī known as *bhūtas*, *piśācas*, and Rākṣasas, and those who take the *prasāda* of goddess Kālī in the shape of flesh or fish are not actually taking the *prasāda* left by goddess Kālī, but the food left by the *bhūtas* and *piśācas*.

37 भवान् परित्रातुमिहावतीर्णो
धर्मं जनानां समयानुरूपम्
वेनापचारादवलुप्तमद्य
तद्देहतो विष्णुकलासि वैन्य

bhavān paritrātum ihāvatīrṇo
dharmaṁ janānāṁ samayānurūpam
venāpacārād avaluptam adya
tad-dehato viṣṇu-kalāsi vainya

bhavān – Your Majesty; *paritrātum* – just to deliver; *iha* – in this world; *avatīrṇaḥ* – incarnated; *dharmam* – religious system; *janānām* – of the people in general; *samaya-anurūpam* – according to the time and circumstances; *vena-apacārāt* – by the misdeeds of King Vena; *avaluptam* – almost vanished; *adya* – at the present moment; *tat* – his; *dehataḥ* – from the body; *viṣṇu* – of Lord Viṣṇu; *kalā* – part of a plenary portion; *asi* – you are; *vainya* – O son of King Vena.

O King Pṛthu, son of Vena, you are the part-and-parcel expansion of Lord Viṣṇu. Due to the mischievous activities of King Vena, religious principles were almost lost. At that opportune moment you descended as the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. Indeed, for the protection of religious principles you have appeared from the body of King Vena.

PURPORT: The way in which Lord Viṣṇu kills the demons and protects the faithful is mentioned in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.8):

paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge

"In order to deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I advent Myself millennium after millennium."

In two hands Lord Viṣṇu always carries a club and a *cakra* to kill demons, and in His other two hands He holds a conchshell and a lotus to give protection to His devotees. When His incarnation is present on this planet or in this universe, the Lord kills the demons and protects His devotees simultaneously. Sometimes Lord Viṣṇu appears in His person as Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Rāma. All of these appearances are mentioned in the *śāstras*. Sometimes He appears as a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* like Lord Buddha. 10 As explained before, these *śaktyāveśa-avatāras* are incarnations of Viṣṇu's power invested in a living entity. Living entities are also part and parcel of Lord Viṣṇu, but they are not as powerful; therefore when a living entity descends

6) What is the easiest way to satisfy the Lord in this age?
7) What would happen if the old ritualistic ceremonies were observed in this age?
8) Why do goddess Kālī and Lord Śiva not eat nonvegetarian food?
9) Who is actually accepting the offerings of flesh or fish made to goddess Kālī?
10) What is a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*?

as an incarnation of Viṣṇu, he is especially empowered by the Lord.

When King Pṛthu is described as an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu, it should be understood that he is a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra*, part and parcel of Lord Viṣṇu, and is specifically empowered by Him. Any living being acting as the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu is thus empowered by Lord Viṣṇu to preach the *bhakti* cult. Such a person can act like Lord Viṣṇu and defeat demons by arguments and preach the *bhakti* cult exactly according to the principles of *śāstra*. As indicated in *Bhagavad-gītā*, whenever we find someone extraordinary preaching the *bhakti* cult, we should know that he is especially empowered by Lord Viṣṇu, or Lord Kṛṣṇa. 11 As confirmed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya* 7.11), *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana*: one cannot explain the glories of the holy name of the Lord without being specifically empowered by Him. If one criticizes or finds fault with such an empowered personality, one is to be considered an offender against Lord Viṣṇu and is punishable. Even though such offenders may dress as Vaiṣṇavas with false *tilaka* and *mālā*, they are never forgiven by the Lord if they offend a pure Vaiṣṇava. There are many instances of this in the *śāstras*.

38 स त्वं विमृश्यास्य भवं प्रजापते
सङ्कल्पनं विश्वसृजां पिपीपृहि
ऐन्द्रीं च मायामुपधर्ममातरं
प्रचण्डपाखण्डपथं प्रभो जहि

sa tvaṁ vimṛśyāsya bhavaṁ prajāpate
saṅkalpanaṁ viśva-sṛjāṁ pipīpṛhi
aindrīṁ ca māyām upadharma-mātaraṁ
pracaṇḍa-pākhaṇḍa-pathaṁ prabho jahi

saḥ – the aforesaid; *tvam* – you; *vimṛśya* – considering; *asya* – of the world; *bhavam* – existence; *prajā-pate* – O protector of the people; *saṅkalpanam* – the determination; *viśva-sṛjām* – of the progenitors of the world; *pipīpṛhi* – just fulfill; *aindrīm* – created by the King of heaven; *ca* – also; *māyām* – illusion; *upadharma* – of the irreligious system of so-called *sannyāsa*; *mātaram* – the mother; *pracaṇḍa* – furious, dangerous; *pākhaṇḍa-patham* – the path of sinful activities; *prabho* – O Lord; *jahi* – please conquer.

11) What is required for one to explain the glories of the holy name?
12) What was Mahārāja Pṛthu's original purpose as an incarnation?

O protector of the people in general, please consider the purpose of your being incarnated by Lord Viṣṇu. The irreligious principles created by Indra are but mothers of so many unwanted religions. Please therefore stop these imitations immediately.

PURPORT: Lord Brahmā addresses King Pṛthu as *prajāpate* just to remind him of his great responsibility in maintaining the peace and prosperity of the citizens. Mahārāja Pṛthu was empowered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead for this purpose only. It is the duty of the ideal king to see that people are properly executing religious principles. Lord Brahmā especially requested King Pṛthu to conquer the pseudoreligious principles produced by King Indra. In other words, it is the duty of the state or king to put a stop to pseudoreligious systems produced by unscrupulous persons. Originally a religious principle is one, given by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and it comes through the channel of disciplic succession in two forms. Lord Brahmā requested Pṛthu Mahārāja to desist from his unnecessary competition with Indra, who was determined to stop Pṛthu Mahārāja from completing one hundred *yajñas*. Instead of creating adverse reactions, it was better for Mahārāja Pṛthu to stop the *yajñas* in the interest of his original purpose as an incarnation. 12 This purpose was to establish good government and set things in the right order.

मैत्रेय उवाच
39 इत्थं स लोकगुरुणा समादिष्टो विशाम्पतिः
तथा च कृत्वा वात्सल्यं मघोनापि च सन्दधे

maitreya uvāca
itthaṁ sa loka-guruṇā
samādiṣṭo viśāmpatiḥ
tathā ca kṛtvā vātsalyaṁ
maghonāpi ca sandadhe

maitreyaḥ uvāca – the great sage Maitreya continued to speak; *ittham* – thus; *saḥ* – King Pṛthu; *loka-guruṇā* – by the original teacher of all people, Lord Brahmā; *samādiṣṭaḥ* – being advised; *viśām-patiḥ* – the king, master of the people; *tathā* – in that way; *ca* – also; *kṛtvā* – having done; *vātsalyam* – affection; *maghonā* – with Indra; *api* – even; *ca* – also; *sandadhe* – concluded peace.

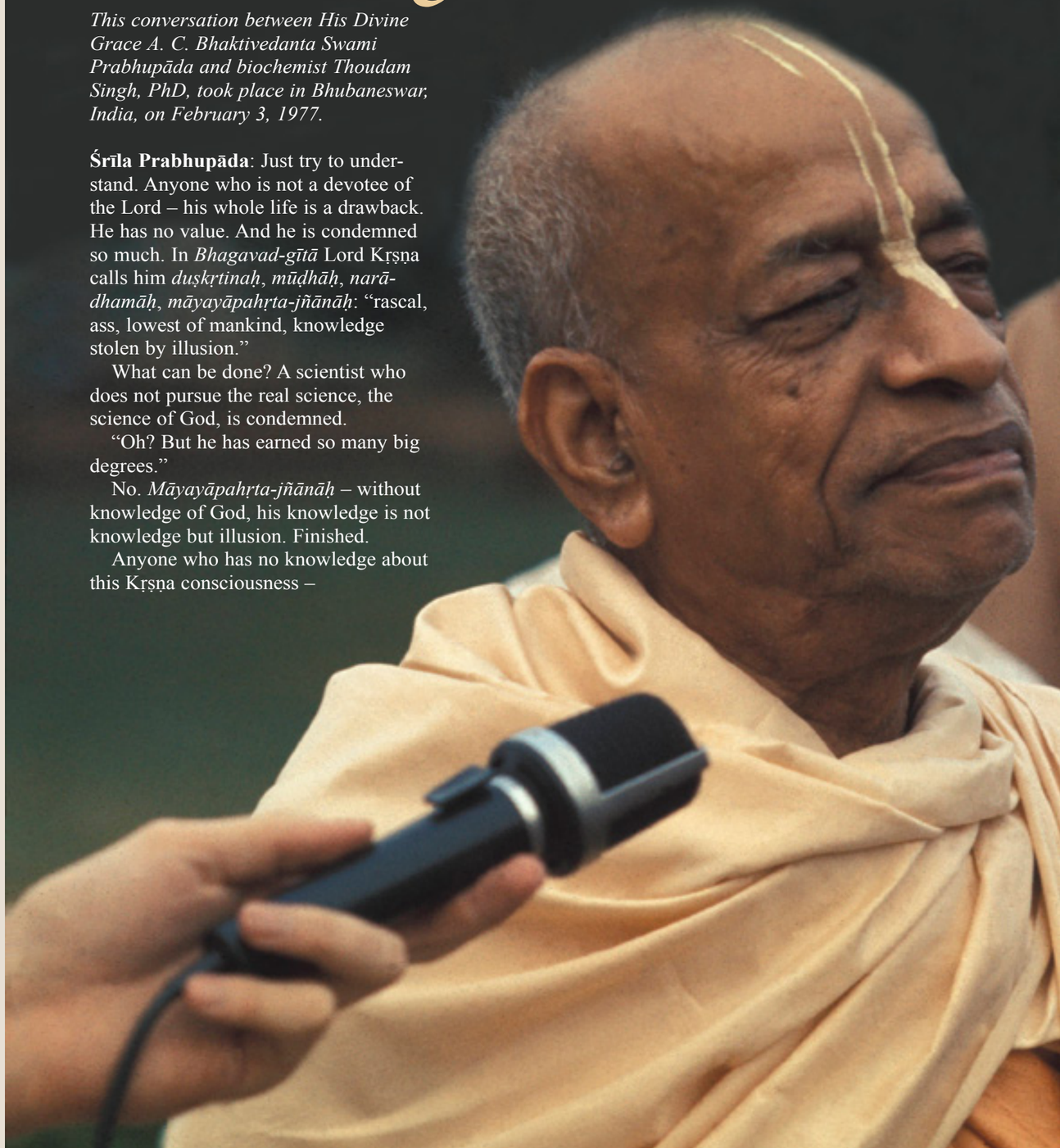
The great sage Maitreya continued: When King Pṛthu was thus advised by the supreme teacher, Lord Brahmā, he abandoned his eagerness to perform yajñas and with great affection concluded a peace with King Indra.

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

"Knowledge" That's Illusion

This conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and biochemist Thoudam Singh, PhD, took place in Bhubaneswar, India, on February 3, 1977.



Śrīla Prabhupāda: Just try to understand. Anyone who is not a devotee of the Lord – his whole life is a drawback. He has no value. And he is condemned so much. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Lord Kṛṣṇa calls him *duṣkṛtinaḥ*, *mūḍhāḥ*, *narādhamāḥ*, *māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ*: "rascal, ass, lowest of mankind, knowledge stolen by illusion."

What can be done? A scientist who does not pursue the real science, the science of God, is condemned.

"Oh? But he has earned so many big degrees."

No. *Māyayāpahṛta-jñānāḥ* – without knowledge of God, his knowledge is not knowledge but illusion. Finished.

Anyone who has no knowledge about this Kṛṣṇa consciousness –

he's so condemned. You can't give him any position. It is not possible. *Piśācī paile:* when a man becomes mad, what is his position?

Even someone who has become a high-court judge – if he has also become mad, he has no position. He's useless.

"Now, wait just a moment. He is a high-court judge!"

That's all right. But his present position – because he is mad – has no value.

I have seen all this with my own eyes. Some fifty years ago, near my father-in-law's house, there lived a very famous scientist. A great scholar – he'd gotten all sorts of degrees, including PhD, and he used to study like anything. Later, he became so mad that he would run on the street in front of my father-in-law's house, naked.

In this conditional state of life there are many, many things beyond our knowledge. We have to take shelter of the *Vedas*.

So what was his value? Just consider. This same man was so educated in so many fields of knowledge. But when he became mad and went running naked, who paid him any respect?

Now, anyone who is under the deluding influence of this material energy – he is like that. Although actually he is part and parcel of God, he has now forgotten God and his own soul. So he's mad.

And *piśācī paile yena mati-channa haya, māyā grasta jīvera haya sei bhāva udaya*: When a man becomes mad, he is finished. Whatever he may speak, it is all madness. It has no importance. His words may seem important on the relative platform, but on the absolute platform they must be mad. Because the basic principle behind the words – the man himself – is mad.

Dr. Singh: The madness of the scientists may be a little different. They are mad or illusioned in that they know little of God's natural law, but they extrapolate vastly.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: You can explain their madness in so many ways, but first try to understand the main idea: a very educated man – when he becomes mad, then he and his words have no value.

In everyday life it is like that. If a high-court judge has become mad, you cannot give him the same high position. You cannot say, "Sir, you are now mad, but that's no matter. You just come and take your exalted seat, and everything will be all right." No, that is not possible.

Of course, if by treatment you restore the man to sanity, that is another thing. Then he can work as before. You see, the person's inner potency is not finished, but as long as he shall remain mad, then his practical qualification will be finished.

Dr. Singh: That was my idea also. For example, a scientist might, let's say, decide to write an equation that describes a spherical object's shape. But if he were to take only two points, his equation would be one for a straight line. And he would delude himself and others into thinking the object not spherical but flat or straight.

In other words, in this example, although the scientist may not be running naked, he would still be mad – because he would be basing his conclusion on insufficient knowledge.

Or to put it another way, sanity means understanding that our knowledge of things is very limited. And so, we have to understand, if we extrapolate from our limited knowledge to draw sweeping conclusions – conclusions beyond our knowledge – then it all becomes . . . just becomes false.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. If we go beyond our knowledge, it is false. When we have gone beyond our knowledge, our conclusions have to be false. Our conclusions must be false – unless they come from someone whose knowledge goes beyond our own. In other words, from someone who is a bona fide authority.

We can return to a familiar example. If I am a small baby and I want to determine who is my father, that is simply beyond my knowledge. But if I receive knowledge from my mother – "Here is your father" – then my knowledge is sure to be correct. This subject matter is beyond my knowledge, but if I receive the knowledge from the right person, then my knowledge is correct.

Āroha-panthā and *avaroha-panthā*. To obtain knowledge, you have two paths: the ascending and descending. On the one hand you have the ascending path, on which you try to rise out of your ignorance through experience, trial and error, deduction. On the other hand you have the descending path, which means the knowledge comes down to you from persons with higher experience. The knowledge descends from higher authorities.

In this conditioned state of life – encased as we are by this material body, with its severely limited senses – there are many, many things beyond our knowledge. Therefore we have to take shelter of the descending path. This is our process. We have to take shelter of the *Vedas*, the scriptures. They are *śruti*, knowledge heard from higher authorities. This knowledge is perfect – coming from God by the system of *paramparā*, or disciplic succession. This knowledge comes from Lord Kṛṣṇa to Brahmā, from Brahmā to Nārada, from Nārada to Vyāsa, and so forth. This knowledge is perfect.

With our limited senses, deductive knowledge has to be imperfect. But with bona fide authorities – starting from the Lord Himself – descending knowledge is perfect. The other way is all imperfect, but this way is perfect.

Dr. Singh: Descending knowledge.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Hmm. This is perfect.

SPORTING PROPENSITY

(*continued from page 65*)

really want to enjoy transcendental sports with Lord Kṛṣṇa and His friends in the spiritual world, we have to "give up this propensity of lording it over material nature" – and the attempt to enjoy mundane sports is rooted in just that propensity.

When we identify with worldly sports, we are simply concocting more unnecessary, artificial material designations for ourselves. We proudly wear T-shirts glorifying our favorite sports team. Although these teams carry imaginary names, many are fittingly named after animals or various creatures, and we often consider the players our heroes.

Real Heroes

In his purport to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.25.25, Śrīla Prabhupāda notes, "Material activities are false heroic activities, whereas restraining the senses from material engagement is great heroism." In a letter in 1975 to a devotee who was distributing his books, Prabhupāda suggested that even greater heroism than controlling one's own senses is giving others transcendental knowledge. "During war time, a farm boy or ordinary clerk who goes to fight for his country on the front immediately becomes a national hero for his sincere effort. So Krishna immediately recognizes a preacher of Krishna consciousness who takes all risks to deliver His message."

In his book *Our Family Business,* Vaiśeṣika Dāsa explains that a true hero – a genuine champion – is "an ambassador of goodwill," a sincere servant of the Lord who helps countless losers rise above the illusory game of material life altogether by introducing them to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, especially through Śrīla Prabhupāda's books. The miracle of this transcendental literatures is that if even convicted athletes, or you and I, are somehow blessed to read and follow it – in a dingy jail cell, a temple ashram, or a fancy penthouse – any of us can become actual winners. Our petty infatuation with illusion's endless games, lifetime after lifetime, can come to an end, and one day we can participate in the real thing: we can sport face to face with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate sportsman.

Sārvabhauma Dāsa, a disciple of Tamāl Kṛṣṇa Goswami, is based in Houston, Texas, where he engages in various Kṛṣṇa conscious preaching and writing projects.

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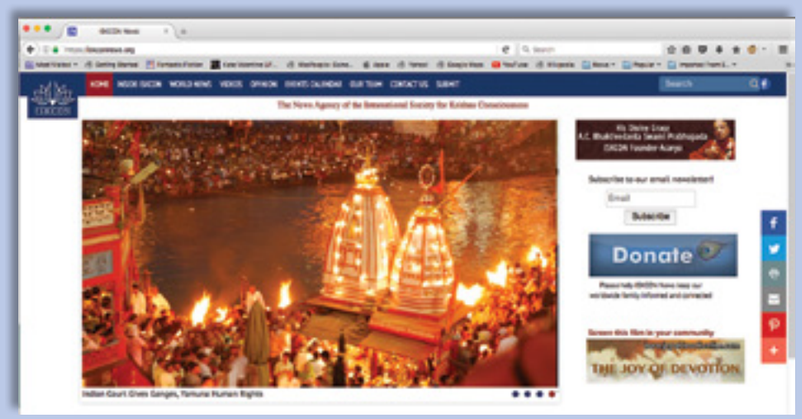

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NEW VRINDABAN

An Overview in Honor of Its 50th Anniversary

by Satyarāja Dāsa

Archival research by Caitanya Maṅgala Dāsa

WITH THE successful worldwide celebration of ISKCON's 50th anniversary in 2016, another semicentennial event naturally follows in its wake: commemoration of the founding of New Vrindaban in 1968, two years after ISKCON's founding. By establishing this farm community, Śrīla Prabhupāda hoped his followers and eventually the rest of the world would embrace the Kṛṣṇa conscious ideal of "simple living and high thinking." This could be accomplished, he taught, by underscoring five important components of a back-to-the-land Vedic ideal, beginning with (1) cow protection, (2) simple living, (3) spiritual

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A view (below) from Govardhan Hill of Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra's temple and guest lodge, with Kusum Sarovara Lake and the peacock-and-swan aviary in the foreground. Above, Vāsudeva Dāsa invites guests to the community's Welcome Center.

ISKCON New Vrindaban Communications

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education, and (4) holy pilgrimage. Under the right direction, he added, these four can lead to the most important component of all: (5) loving Kṛṣṇa.

This article has two parts. The first is an overview of New Vrindaban – what it is, how it started, and what it has accomplished. The second focuses on four devotees who bring to life the five components that Prabhupāda mandated for New Vrindaban. While the community has produced a multitude of devotees who could be singled out for their consummate service, these four, each with a penchant for one of the initial components mentioned above, will serve as a sample. Their stories show how the fifth component, loving Kṛṣṇa, is the natural result of properly engaging in New Vrindaban's central activities.

PART I

Origins and Development

Vṛndāvana is Kṛṣṇa's paradise in the spiritual world, the kingdom of God described in the ancient wisdom texts of India. A replica of this realm

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Śrīla Prabhupāda (top) delivers the Bhāgavata Dharma discourses during the 1972 Janmāṣṭamī & Vyāsa-pūjā celebrations on Govindaji Hill at the Bahulaban farm. At left, Prabhupāda tours his under-construction Palace during his final visit to New Vrindaban. Above: Prabhupāda's first visit, spring 1969. At right: hauling wood with oxen, summer 1975.

Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

exists even today as a village in the Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh, India, where Kṛṣṇa walked the earth some five thousand years ago. Soon after Prabhupāda arrived in the West, in 1965, he envisioned yet another replication of Vṛndāvana – New Vrindaban.[1]

In May 1956, Prabhupāda wrote a two-part *Back to Godhead* article about the potential for such a project in the Western world. The article promoted the notion of a community of devotees living close to nature according to the principles of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. He called the project Geeta Nagari (the name of his subsequent farm in Port Royal, Pennsylvania).

Rishi Sethi

Vṛndāvana's initial Western counterpart came to be through the agency of two early disciples, Kīrtanānanda Swami and Hayagrīva Dāsa. In the winter of 1968 they saw a brief newspaper article in which an enterprising landowner-turned-yogi, Richard Rose, mentioned that he was looking for people to create an ashram in Marshall County, West Virginia. "The conception is one of a non-profit, non-interfering, non-denominational retreat or refuge," read the almost prescient article, "where philosophers might come to work communally together, or independently, where a library and other facilities might be developed."[2]

Several months later, Kīrtanānanda and Hayagrīva, who had temporarily developed a strained relationship with their spiritual master, set out on their own to visit the land. They negotiated with the owner and reached a provisional financial agreement. Kīrtanānanda settled there for a few months in a farmhouse in the woods.

That summer, he and Hayagrīva visited Prabhupāda in Canada to make amends. His Divine Grace "forgave his renegade disciples in Montreal with a garland of roses and a shower of tears."[3] With Prabhupāda's approval they returned to West Virginia and leased the property. A month later Prabhupāda wrote to them, "Now we can work with great enthusiasm for constructing a New Vrindaban in the United States of America."[4]

Excited about his new project, Prabhupāda had his secretary, Brahmānanda Dāsa, write to the various ISKCON centers asking those devotees who were able and inclined to support New Vrindaban by visiting if not staying on and lending manpower.[5] He had already given the land its special name in an earlier letter: "You have New York, New England, and so many 'New' duplicates of European countries in the USA, why not import New Vrindaban in your country?"[6]

Soon after the arrival of Brahmānanda's letter – that same month, in fact – New Vrindaban's first deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa made Their appearance as well: A small

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The front entrance to Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra's temple (left), guarded by Jaya and Vijaya, the Vaikuṇṭha gatekeepers. Below, guests enjoy sumptuous prasādam *at Govinda's restaurant.*

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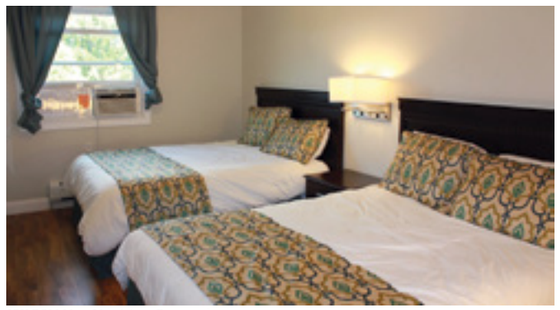

ISKCON New Vrindaban Communications

The recently renovated guest lodge (above) and its updated rooms (left).

pair of bell-metal *mūrtis*, compliments of a devotee who had just returned from India. Prabhupāda was delighted. "I am very glad to learn that Harivilas has given you a pair of Radha-Krishna Murtis, so it appears that Radha-Krishna is very kind on you, because you went to Vrindaban to live there but circumstantially, you could not live there, and you left. Krishna has given you New Vrindaban, as well as, out of His good will, He has come to you. It is very surprising. So please welcome the Deity and install Him in a nice throne."[7] These deities would eventually be called "Little Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra," after the main deities of the temple, installed three years later. Also in 1968, Kīrtanānanda brought from Montreal Jagannātha deities to be worshiped on the community's small altar.

With deity worship in place, a set of clear instructions from their spiritual master, and new devotees trickling in, New Vrindaban developed, steadily if also slowly. Despite frigid winters and austere conditions, sincere and determined devotees gradually made the journey and helped develop the small, humble ashram into a thriving Kṛṣṇa conscious village. Cows, central to the New Vrindaban paradigm, were soon bought and bred. Calves were born, and a very real bovine presence gave the land the feel of its namesake. Hand-tended gardens were set in place, providing food for the community and flowers for the deities. Oxen and horses were trained to pull plows and wagons, resulting in small agricultural miracles. The fields gave birth to crops of corn and hay, harvested and stored in silos for the cows to eat during New Vrindaban's cold winters. All the while, devotees were learning the philosophy of Kṛṣṇa consciousness under senior disciples. Simple living, high thinking.

Spring of 1969 saw Prabhupāda's first visit to the farm, and he loved it. He stayed a little over a month, but he made it clear that New Vrindaban was home. After he left, he continued to guide his disciples on transcendental life in a rural environment through many letters and even a few subsequent visits, in 1972, 1974, and 1976.

By August 1970 almost fifty residents were living at the community, and the number would keep growing. Beautiful hand-carved white marble deities were imported from India and installed on Janmāṣṭamī, August 13, 1971, and after that, New Vrindaban grew like wildfire.

Throughout the 1970s, cows, peacocks, and additional land were acquired, until New Vrindaban – initially some 138 acres – would eventually boast nearly 2,500, with devotees anxious to join from all quarters.

Hayagrīva wrote in 1972: "In '69 and '70 we built cottages and gradually expanded to include a dozen people. Then in the winter of '70, we began making Spiritual Sky incense and distributing it through the city temples. This proved to be a real gold mine. By the spring of '71 sufficient money came in to enable us to buy the other two farms [nearby], and as soon as we did people started pouring in."[8] Kīrtanānanda Swami became a lead-

Arjuna Bhattacharya

Arjuna Bhattacharya

Inside Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra's temple (above). Far left is the altar of Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā. Front left: the Six Gosvāmīs. Center altar: Gaura-Nitāi, Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra, Gopāla Nāthajī. Front right: Nṛsiṁhadeva & Prahlāda. Far right: Śrīla Prabhupāda. At left, devotees blissfully raise their arms and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa during one of New Vrindaban's biannual 24 Hour Kirtan festivals.

Arjuna Bhattacharya

ing ISKCON *sannyāsī*, and his project became one of ISKCON's premier pilgrimage sites, with devotees worldwide attending its many annual festivals.

A tour de force development was Prabhupāda's Palace of Gold. (See my article in *Back to Godhead*, May/June 2016.) Conceived in 1972 as a comfortable residence for Prabhupāda whenever he visited New Vrindaban, it was still unfinished when he departed this world in November 1977. The idea morphed into its being a memorial shrine, and with that vision the devotees continued to work on it as a lasting tribute to Śrīla Prabhupāda. Upon its completion in 1979, it exceeded everyone's wildest dreams – a dazzling, highly wrought, even otherworldly palace of marble, gold, carved teakwood, and the blood, sweat, and tears of numerous dedicated devotees – a fitting tribute to the modern world's greatest spiritual master.

"It's hard to believe that Prabhupada's Palace is in West Virginia," wrote the *Courier-Journal* of Louisville, Kentucky. "In fact, it's hard to believe it's on this planet."[9] *Life* magazine told readers that the Palace is "a place where tourists can come and be amazed."[10] *The New York Times* summed it up: "Welcome to Heaven."[11] The Palace was unquestionably a highpoint in New Vrindaban's achievements, and throughout the 1980s it reaped the benefits of the devotees' monumental endeavor.

Unfortunately, Kīrtanānanda Swami, though a qualified and noble leader in many ways, temporarily brought New Vrindaban to its knees,

Laxman Poddar

The main altar (above). Kīrtana *during the 2017 Janmāṣṭamī celebrations (right).* Ārati *to Lord Nṛsiṁhadeva and Prahlāda Mahārāja (above right).* Mūrtis *of the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan (far right).*

Arjuna Bhattacharya

Laxman Poddar

Malhari Media

leading it into questionable and deplorable realms, some illegal, for which he was reprimanded and given a jail sentence, as were others. Naturally, the Governing Body Commission of ISKCON deposed him, for his wayward activity was not representative of the movement's ideals and teachings. Thus he was excommunicated from the movement in 1994.

Throughout the 1990s and into the early years of the twenty-first century, New Vrindaban suffered, even as the Palace, at first, continued to thrive and receive many visitors. But signs of decay soon appeared. New Vrindaban's troubles became the stuff of books and news articles, causing even sincere followers to leave. Various deviations continued to occur. As a result, from the early 1990s until only recently the Palace suffered financially, causing maintenance to be neglected and an overall downward spiral, but one that was not to last.

As the first decade of the twenty-first century came to a close, a new day dawned, and New Vrindaban started to rebuild. By 2011 a new team of dedicated devotees picked up where the old crew had left off, with some of the older devotees staying on and gaining new momentum. New acolytes joined hands with New Vrindaban stalwarts and worked diligently to revamp the original spiritual vision of Prabhupāda's first farm community. It is now on solid ground, with the community learning from previous mistakes. Indeed, fifty thousand tourists and pilgrims still visit each year.[12] In recent years an ambitious multimillion dollar renewal effort has been set in place, with an enthusiasm that rivals the Palace's initial construction.

NOTES

1. The earthly replica of Vṛndāvana in the spiritual world is spelled "Vrindavan" on modern maps. Śrīla Prabhupāda used the Bengali-style spelling when naming "New Vrindaban."
2. Richard Rose, *The San Francisco Oracle,* December 1967.
3. Hayagrīva Dāsa, "Chant," *Brijabasi Spirit*, November 1981, p. 20.

An aerial photo of an area in the heart of New Vrindaban. Śrīla Prabhupāda's Palace is in the upper left. Thirty-foot-tall Gaura-Nitāi sculptures can be seen in the center, just above Kusum Sarovara Lake and below Govardhan Hill. To the right are guest cabins, the Yogashala, and community gardens.

4. Letter from Prabhupāda, 8/23/68. Quoted in Hayagrīva Dāsa, "New Vrindaban," in *Back to Godhead*, Feb. 1, 1969 (Vol. 1, No. 23). Online version: http://www.backtogodhead.in/new/vrindaban-hayagriva-dasa/

5. Brahmānanda's letter, dated September 7, 1968, and approved by Prabhupāda, summed up their master's vision for New Vrindaban in those earliest days: "It has a farmhouse and several other structures, a well, streams, hills (Govardhan, as named by Swamiji [Prabhupāda]), pasture grounds (a cow will be acquired soon), ghat, pond, woodland, all situated on 138 acres. Prabhupāda has requested that 7 temples be established there. Its main activity will be cow protection and to show the world that simply by living with cows and land and chanting HARE KRISHNA a perfect society will prevail. . . . A great deal of work is required and Swamiji has requested at least four devotees to go there immediately. New Vrindaban lacks [such] so-called necessities as hot running water and toilets, so that only stout and sturdy devotees are needed, especially those with carpentry experience and can do manual labor."

6. Śrīla Prabhupāda letter to Hayagrīva, 3/17/68.

7. Śrīla Prabhupāda letter to Kīrtanānanda Swami, 9/22/68.

8. Howard Wheeler, "New Vrindaban: A Hare Kṛṣṇa Community in West Virginia," *Mother Earth News,* July/August 1972.

9. "Children of Krishna: Seeking heaven in West Virginia," *Courier-Journal Magazine* (Sunday, February 10, 1980).

10. Hillary Johnson, "Children of a Harsh Bliss: In a West Virginia Commune, an Extraordinary Look at Life and Love Among the Krishnas," *Life* (April 1980).

11. Edward Schumacher, "West Virginia Marvels at Indian Palace," *The New York Times* (Monday, September 3, 1979).

12. Sarah Pulliam, "A lower-key kind of Krishna," *Columbus Dispatch* (July 18, 2008).

13. http://www.palaceofgold.com/history.html

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A guest cabin and the Yogashala viewed from across Kusum Sarovara Lake (right). Below, swans gracefully glide across the lake in front of Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra's boathouse and Gaura-Nitāi. Paul Chang (below right) leads a yoga class at the Yogashala, built in 2017.

ISKCON New Vrindaban Communications

PART II

The Five Principles Of New Vrindaban

Here we briefly survey the five components that Prabhupāda mandated for New Vrindaban: (1) cow protection, (2) simple living, (3) spiritual education, (4) holy pilgrimage, and (5) loving Kṛṣṇa.

1. Cow Protection

"Krishna by His practical example," Prabhupāda wrote, "taught us to give all protection to the cows, and that should be the main business of New Vrindaban."[14] Apropos of this, New Vrindaban is home to the first and longest-running cow-protection pro-

gram in ISKCON and the Western world. It has been in operation since the spring of 1969, when the community's first cow, Kaliya, made her way into the association of devotees. The heroes who have championed the cow program at New Vrindaban are many, but one devotee in particular has worked hard to make this a reality.

Doug Fintel was born in 1954 in Norfolk, Virginia. Raised on a farm in northwest Iowa, he migrated to the mountains outside Denver, Colorado, where he deepened his love for nature. His involvement in the counterculture of the 1960s reached a highpoint when he met the devotees of Kṛṣṇa, particularly Padmanābha and Mahotsava, a husband-and-wife team looking for interested seekers in that part of the country. Doug had started a firewood business, but the devotees won his heart, and he began to think how he could engage as one of them more directly.

Frequenting the Denver ISKCON temple in the winter of 1976, he liked the idea of a farm community dedicated to Kṛṣṇa, and New Vrindaban seemed a natural fit. His general psychophysical makeup and his background in rural America made him just the right man for a back-to-the-land Kṛṣṇa conscious environment, especially for the plow department and farm work. He has been in New Vrindaban, serving faithfully, since before Prabhupāda's departure from this world. In fact, he had heard about Prabhupāda's love for New Vrindaban's cow-protection program soon after he joined ISKCON in 1977. New Vrindaban was abuzz with Prabhupāda's recent visit. Madhava Smullen writes,

> In 1976, when [Prabhupāda] visited New Vrindaban for the last time, the community was caring for four working teams of oxen

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Subhadra, Jaya Radha, Vamsika, three young heifers (above), graze in the pasture outside the temple barn. At right, Sukhayanti Dāsī, Nīla Gopāla Dāsa, and their two young daughters, Sudevi and Rangadevi, greet Sriya at the community's Nandagram farm.

Hari Bhakti Devī Dāsī

Raṇaka Dāsa (above), who has steadily cared for the cows in New Vrindaban for over forty years, stands with the three heifers shown on the previous page. Right: Twice daily, every day of the year, Ānanda Vidyā Dāsa and Lalitā Gopī Dāsī lovingly milk the protected cows that provide dairy products for the deities and devotees.

Laxman Poddar

and over 150 cows. A new barn had been erected in Bahulaban [one of New Vrindaban's first sectors], and Prabhupāda visited it to see the cows and four newborn calves. He let one of them lick his hand as a devotee told him how the cows were yielding about 120 gallons of milk every day, which they were turning into ghee, cheese and buttermilk. Prabhupāda was pleased.[15]

Doug, initiated as Raṇaka Dāsa, gradually became more and more involved with New Vrindaban's cows and is now, with their help of course, producing "ahimsa milk" – consciously trying to avoid any pain for the dairy cows on the farm.

Raṇaka is looking for a sustainable model for the future.

"In the past," he says, "New Vrindaban was known for its huge dairy production, but we couldn't take care of the cows properly. So we're looking for balance, a sustainable model for the future, where the cows are happy and produce in abundance. I think we're getting there."

2. Simple Living

Prabhupāda sometimes referred to self-sufficiency with the phrase "simple living," reminiscent of his ISKCON Statement of Purpose

Timeline

1968
–January 22–
First known mention of "New Vrindaban" in a letter from Śrīla Prabhupāda.

–August 8–
Founding of New Vrindaban with Hayagrīva's signing of a 99-year lease.

–August 23–
Prabhupāda's letter to Kīrtanānanda and Hayagrīva fully authorizing the establishment of New Vrindaban.

1969
–Spring–
Purchase of Kaliya (the community's first cow) and the start of ISKCON's cow-protection program.

–May 21–June 22–
Śrīla Prabhupāda's first visit.

1970
–August–
First New Vrindaban Janmāṣṭamī festival.

1971
–Winter–
Large Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā carved in Pittsburgh by Nara Nārāyaṇa Dāsa.

–August–
Janmāṣṭamī: Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra installation ceremony at the Vrindaban farmhouse.

1972
–May–
Bahulaban temple opens, and Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra move there from the Vrindaban farmhouse.

–August 31–September 8–
Śrīla Prabhupāda's second visit. New Vrindaban sees the arrival of its twenty-first cow.

1973
–Spring–
Guruban property purchased (future site of Prabhupāda's Palace).

–June 2–3–
Groundbreaking ceremony for Prabhupāda's Palace and Govindajī Temple. Installation of Rādhā-Mādhava at Madhuban and Rādhā–Vrindaban-Nātha at Vrindaban.

–August 23–
New Vrindaban Community, Inc. incorporated by Hayagrīva, Paramānanda Dāsa, and others.

1974
–April–
First issue of *Brijabasi Spirit* newsletter published.

–July 18–23–
Śrīla Prabhupāda's third visit, and the first to his future palace.

1975
–August–
113 total cows in the herd: 47 milk cows, 27 heifers, 35 oxen, and 4 bulls.

–September–
New Vrindaban: The Spiritual Frontier, ISKCON Cinema movie released.

–Fall–
Big Gaura-Nitāi deities move from Buffalo to New Vrindaban.

1976
–June 21–July 2–
Śrīla Prabhupāda's fourth (and final) visit.

1977
–January–
Kaliya, the first New Vrindaban and ISKCON cow, passes away at Vrindaban Farm.

1978
150 total cows in the herd.

1979
–September 2–
Dedication ceremony of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Palace of Gold.

1981
–Labor Day–
Dharmasala guest lodge opens.

–Spring–
Varnashram College, a vocational school for teenage boys, starts (35 students by spring 1983).

1982
–March/April–
Palace Gift Store and Restaurant opens. Guest cabins open. State of West Virginia recognizes New Vrindaban as an unincorporated town.

1983
–January–
Cow population approximately 300.

–March–
WV Dept. of Highways adds New Vrindaban to official state map.

–July 4–
Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra's Temple of Understanding opens. Deities move from Bahulaban. Śrī Gopāla Nāthjī installation.

1984
–January–
Two temple lakes completed, Kaliya Ghat (now called Kusum Sarovara) and Chaitanya Ghat.

1985
–Winter–
Large Gaura-Nitāi sculptures dedicated.

–Spring–
Govardhan Dairy is opened in Valley Barn, built to handle 200 milking cows.

1986
–January 6–
Nṛsiṁhadeva and Prahlāda deities installed.

–March–
Malini the elephant arrives.

1987
–March–
Kīrtanānanda expelled from ISKCON.

–June–
Prabhupāda's Palace rose garden wins prestigious award from All-American Rose Selections.

1988
–February–
New Vrindaban expelled from ISKCON. Difficult period, experimentation with Vaiṣṇava/Christian blend.

1991
–June 26–
Census: 300 residents (131 adults).

1994
–March–
New Vrindaban officially excludes Kīrtanānanda Swami.

–May–
Brijabasi Spirit returns focus to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his vision for New Vrindaban.

1995
–Winter–
Dānavīra Goswami and his Rupanuga Vedic College move to New Vrindaban, as does ISCOWP (International Society for Cow Protection).

1998
–February–
New Vrindaban provisionally accepted back into ISKCON. ECO-Vrindaban (GEETA) started.

2000
–May–
Inaugural Festival of Inspiration.

–Fall–
New Vrindaban fully accepted back into ISKCON.

2006
–March–
Prabhupāda's Palace formally recognized by GBC as Smṛti Samādhi.

2007
–June–
Inaugural 24 Hour Kirtan Festival.

–September–
Gopal's Garden Home School Co-op opens.

2008
–September 11–
New Vrindaban Community, Inc. name changed to ISKCON New Vrindaban, Inc.

2010
–April–
Palace Renovation Committee started.

2012
–April–
Start of construction for Rādhā-Gopīnātha Temple by Dham Seva, Inc.

–July 10–
CNN calls Prabhupāda's Palace one of the "8 religious wonders to see in the U.S."

–September–
Inaugural Festival of Colors.

2014
–Summer–
Renovations on Palace entrance and front steps begin.

2016
–December–
Prabhupada's Palace front steps renovation completed.

–July 16–
First Rathayātrā in Wheeling, WV.

2017
–April 15–
Yoga Shala inaugurated.

–Autumn–
Prabhupāda's Palace outer wall renovation completed.

2018
New Vrindaban's Fiftieth Anniversary.

2019
Celebrations to come:

–April–
ISKCON Cow Protection Fiftieth Anniversary.

–September–
Prabhupāda's Palace Fortieth Anniversary.

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#6: "To bring the members closer together for the purpose of teaching a simpler and more natural way of life." Using the things of this world in God's service is real renunciation, or saintly life. It is called *yukta-vairāgya*. As Prabhupāda wrote: "Yukta Vairagya means that we should simply accept the bare necessities of our material part of life, and try to save time for spiritual advancement. This should be the motto of New Vrindaban."[16]

One New Vrindaban devotee who embodies that mood is Vidyā Devī Dāsī. Born in Wisconsin as Mary Smith in 1949, she and her husband, Mādhava Ghoṣa, now deceased, came from rustic, agrarian backgrounds and had always put a premium on intelligent agriculture, even before they joined Prabhupāda's farm community. Her ancestors were among the first settlers in Wisconsin, developing sophisticated agronomical techniques early on.

"It's in my DNA," she says. "I was born on a farm, and I've been living close to the land from childhood."

She arrived in New Vrindaban in 1972 and met Mādhava a few years after settling there. They devoted their lives to gardening for Kṛṣṇa, growing vegetables and flowers for the community while raising their five children. She's especially fond of the gorgeous and variegated gardens at Prabhupāda's Palace, which she nurtured from the ground up, their beauty competing with the Palace itself.

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New Vrindaban devotees show festival participants how to chant japa *during the second annual Wheeling Rathayātrā (top left). Daśaratha Dāsa serves* prasādam *during the festival (far left). Above: the 2017 Rathayātrā procession. Left: Devotees from New Vrindaban helped organize the first Pittsburgh Festival of Colors, in April 2014.*

But even prior to the Palace, she and the other New Vrindaban farmhands performed natural miracles. By 1974 the Bahulaban temple garden expanded to 1.5 acres, with similar large gardens in the sections of New Vrindaban known as Vrindaban and Madhuban. Plantings included more than thirty kinds of vegetables, fruits, and herbs, along with oats, which became a staple in New Vrindaban.

Teams of horses plowed the fields.

Laxman Poddar

Devotees involved included Varṣāṇā Swami (then Kaśyapa Dāsa), Tejomaya, Mānonātha, Mādhava Ghoṣa, Advaitācārya, and Tapah-puñja, among others. A greenhouse, built in 1975, extended growing periods and allowed flower growing during winter.

Vidyā also started a side business, called Nature Crafting. She would grow and sell tomatoes, herbs, flowers, and other crops, and she would teach the locals the value of organic gardening for both consumers and the environment. She laughs as she remembers how they would grow gourds of all shapes and sizes. These became among their most popular items. She would paint them and turn them into birdhouses and even Jagannātha deities, which sold well. Prabhupāda's strong endorsement for this kind of work came in 1976:

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Amy Smethhurst

Laxman Poddar

Laxman Poddar

Left, Saṅkīrtana Dāsa and Rucī Dāsī greet guests after a Mahābhārata *dramatic storytelling at the University of Cincinnati. Below: Rucī Dāsī in her classroom. Below, left: Vidyā Dāsī shows some of the loki squash grown in her garden.*

Varṣāṇā Swami (above left) stands near Radha Kunda, with the partially completed Rādhā-Gopinātha Mandir in the background. At left, devotees pick flowers in the deity flower garden.

"Yes. Anything grown in the garden, that is hundred times [more] valuable than [if] it is purchased from the market."[17]

ECO-Vrindaban (ECO-V), a nonprofit organization, was started in 1998 to care for New Vrindaban's cows, and in 2014 it also took responsibility for locally grown crops and flowers, continuing and expanding New Vrindaban's self-sufficiency program. By caring for New Vrindaban's bovine life, particularly by milking its happy and productive dairy cows, and by developing sustainable agriculture, ECO-V has been realizing Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision of simple living for the devotee community.

3. Spiritual Education

Prabhupāda often said that people are suffering due to a lack of knowledge. His hope was that through spiritual education, people would become happy. This aligns with his ISKCON Statement of Purpose #1: "To systematically propagate spiritual knowledge to society at large and to educate all people in the techniques of spiritual life in order to check the imbalance of values in life and to achieve real unity and peace in the world."

Prabhupāda wrote, "It is necessary for the leaders of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement to start educational institutions in different parts of the world to train children, starting at the age of five years. Thus such children will not become hippies or spoiled children of society; rather, they can all become devotees of the Lord. The face of the world will then change automatically."[18]

Specifically for New Vrindaban, he wrote, "Please now try to organize a children's school. This is one of our programs in New Vrindaban. . . . You can form a school committee and get it recognized by the Education Board. Then more children will be sent."[19] The realization of Śrīla

Prabhupāda's educational dream for New Vrindaban has been spotty, with various successes and failures. But the community continues to keep the goal in mind, and various attempts are being made to implement both children's schooling and higher education.

Saṅkīrtana Dāsa and Rucī Devī Dāsī, Andy and Ruth Fraenkel, are two names that stand out in the realm of New Vrindaban education. The couple met in college in 1968, were initiated in 1973, and arrived in New Vrindaban by 1976. And for the next forty years, Rucī, especially, dedicated herself to teaching preschool and elementary school to prepare children for a life of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, but no less for the rigors of living in the outside world. While Saṅkīrtana has underlined the importance of education through storytelling and dramatic performance, for which he has won significant accolades and awards, Rucī has concentrated her focus on schools and an academic environment.

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Pilgrims enjoy tasty prasādam *outside Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra's temple during Labor Day festivities, September 2017.*

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Way back in the 1970s when the New Vrindaban school was called Nandagram, the small classrooms for boys and girls gradually grew into one of the largest ISKCON *gurukulas* in the world. But the ashram-based facility was shut down by the end of the 1980s. Then, from 1989 to the late 1990s, there was a day school, which grew into Gopal's Garden, opened by Rucī in 2007. Gradually, the New Vrindaban educational system evolved into a homeschooling cooperative that keeps improving.

"Today," writes Madhava Smullen, "[Rucī] continues to teach at the Gopal's Garden Homeschool Co-op, established in 2007." There she provides a balanced blend of standard academic subjects and Kṛṣṇa conscious education. At the end of each school year, she produces an anthology of the students' writings and illustrations, now used in ISKCON schools worldwide.

4. Holy Pilgrimage

Among the several farm projects and rural communities started by Śrīla Prabhupāda, only New Vrindaban was given the mandate to build replicas of holy places of Vrindavan: "There will be seven principal temples, namely, Govinda, Gopinatha, Madana Mohana, Syamasundara, Radha Ramana, Radha Damodara, and Gokulananda."[20]

Thus, from its inception New Vrindaban was seen not only as a pilgrimage site in its own right, but also as a reproduction of the original pilgrimage site – Vrindavan itself, home to the original temples of the Gosvāmīs, leading followers of Lord Caitanya.

"Activities exhibited by Kṛṣṇa Himself at Bhauma Vṛndāvana, the Vṛndāvana-dhāma existing on

Tourists enter the grounds of Śrīla Prabhupāda's Palace of Gold (above). Below: Prabhupāda's Palace viewed from his lotus pond, summer 2017.

this planet," wrote Śrīla Prabhupāda, "are not different from His activities on the planet Goloka Vṛndāvana. This is proper realization of Vṛndāvana anywhere. In our Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement we inaugurated the New Vṛndāvana activities, wherein devotees are always engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord, and this is not different from Goloka Vṛndāvana."[21]

One person who has taken the pilgrimage aspect of New Vrindaban to heart is Varṣāṇā Swami. Born John Mowen in 1950, he hails from Morristown, New Jersey, but spent many of his early years on his grandfather's farm in Pulaski, in upstate New York. He also studied theology at St. Andrew's College, but quickly decided that he could best pursue God in the forest, where he could pray and contemplate divinity without disturbance.

It was in the forest that he met the devotees. He returned with them to the Brooklyn temple and took up devotional practices. This was in 1972. Relocating to New Vrindaban, he was initiated by Prabhupāda a year later. He has been there ever since.

Varṣāṇā Swami gradually became known for landscaping, carving the holy area out of the existing contours

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Pilgrims and tourists refresh themselves at the Palace Smoothie Shack (right). Below, guests descend from the Palace to the gardens and grounds.

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of the West Virginia foothills. He has "excavated" replicas of Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda at Govardhana Hill in New Vrindaban, and is gradually constructing Rādhā-Gopīnātha Mandir, the first of Śrīla Prabhupāda's proposed replicas of the seven main temples of Vrindavan. This has become a prized pilgrimage spot for visitors. As time goes on, the other temples will manifest as well, and pilgrims will come from all over the world, as they do now to see the Palace of Gold. Varśāṇā Swami clearly has a calling to liberate these holy places from the raw landscape that is New Vrindaban.

5. Loving Kṛṣṇa

Ultimately all four of the above components work in concert to bring about love for Kṛṣṇa, the fifth, if also the primary, principle of the New Vrindaban way of life. The third of the seven purposes of ISKCON is "To bring the members of the Society together with each other and nearer to Kṛṣṇa, the prime entity, thus developing the idea within the members, and humanity at large, that each soul is part and parcel of the quality of Godhead (Kṛṣṇa)." This is where New Vrindaban ultimately hopes to take the people who live there, and to carry all its visitors on that journey as well.

NOTES

14. Śrīla Prabhupāda letter to Hayagrīva, 6/14/68.

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Guests are led on a guided tour (far left, top) through the interior of Prabhupāda's Palace. Śrīla Prabhupāda's mūrti *in his study (far left, bottom) depicts him in a writing pose. Thirty-one stained glass windows, reflected in crystal chandeliers and mirrored ceilings, line the way around the Palace portico (left, center). Above, Dāmodara Dāsa leads a group through the Palace's main temple room. Prabhupāda's bedroom (left) has walls inlaid with Italian Botticino marble and a ceiling with nearly one thousand hand-painted flowers.*

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A walkway behind Prabhupāda's Palace features tree planters with lotus designs (right). Below: sunrise seen through one of the four chatras *that adorn an exterior terrace of Prabhupāda's Palace.*

15. http://www.brijabasispirit.com/2016/01/07/srila-prabhupada-kaliya-iskcons-first-cow/
16. https://vanisource.org/wiki/680614_-_Letter_to_Hayagriva_written_from_Montreal
17. https://vanisource.org/wiki/760803_-_Conversation_C_-_New_Mayapur
19. https://vanisource.org/wiki/691207_-_Letter_to_Ranadhir_written_from_London
20. https://vanisource.org/wiki/680823_-_Letter_to_Kirtanananda_and_Hayagriva_written_from_Montreal
21. http://vanisource.org/wiki/CC_Madhya_7.69
22. http://www.brijabasispirit.com/2016/10/16/new-vrindaban-devotees-serve-Prabhupada-at-his-palace-with-renewed-enthusiasm/

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Going Forward

ON THE CENTRAL altar of the New Vrindaban temple stand Śrī Śrī Rādhā–Vrindaban-Chandra – Rādhā with Kṛṣṇa as "the moon of Vṛndāvana." They are accompanied by deities of Gopāla Nāthjī, Gaura-Nitāi, Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā, and Narasiṁha and Prahlāda. Opened in 1983, the temple is elegant beyond words and competes with the Palace for the devotees' attention.

But the land and the cows will always hold a special place in the hearts of New Vrindaban residents. Although the landscaping and the development of various farm projects have been ongoing since the community's inception, there is more to do.

Recently a Yogashala opened just down the road from the main temple, and it hosts courses on yoga, meditation, and *kīrtana*. This is part of a new outreach program meant to augment the Palace as a draw for outsiders. But the Palace is still the main attraction. New Vrindaban remains a holy place for pilgrims and a destination for many Western tourists, mainly because of the Palace of Gold.

Madhava Smullen wrote in October 2016:

> It's a reasonable expectation: this year, overall tourism at Prabhupāda's Palace already increased from 20,000 annually to approximately 30,000. Vrajadhama [now Vrajakiśora Dāsa, the new manager for Prabhupāda's Palace] attributes this to stronger social media presence, as well as an increasing interest from TV, radio and print media.
>
> "It's really about getting ourselves out there," says Vrajadhama. "Because we have so much to offer. People are becoming aware that we're doing a lot of work here, and that we're ready to reintroduce ourselves to the world. They're excited about that, and they want to come and see what we're up to."[22]

Apropos of New Vrindaban's readiness for the future, the year 2018, its fiftieth anniversary, promises to be a major step forward. Several steps, in fact. To begin, five main events will commemorate the fiftieth in glorious New Vrindaban style. People will come from around the world for two weekend extravaganzas, particularly for congregation/donors, that start off the festival year in March and April. VIP events for West Virginia government officials and ISKCON dignitaries begin in May.

During the summer there will be an open-house weekend for the public, with advertising that is sure to bring busloads of tourists from around the country and devotees from around the world. Finally, the main event will be a huge semicentennial celebration in September, commemorating the founding of New Vrindaban. In addition, all of New Vrindaban's usual annual events will continue in a bigger and better way, including Gaura Pūrṇimā, Nṛsiṁha Caturdaśī, 24 Hour Kirtan, Janmāṣṭamī, Rādhāṣṭamī, Wheeling Rathayātrā, Prabhupāda's Appearance Day, and the Festival of Colors.

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Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the Original Sporting Propensity

Kṛṣṇa is always engaged in sport, and when we try to imitate Him, we lose.

by Sārvabhauma Dāsa

WHEN THE 2017 Super Bowl game, the summit of American professional football, was held in Houston, a devotee convinced me and a few others to try to distribute Śrīla Prabhupāda's books at a huge pre-game event downtown. Venturing into the passionate, teeming crowd, we sold a few books, but not so many. This experience reinforced what was already obvious: mundane sport certainly has a powerful allure. In fact, every year over six hundred

Painting (top): Dhṛtī Devī Dāsī

billion dollars are spent worldwide on the sports industry, which caters to an ever more fervent fan base.

Why are sports so popular? According to Vaiṣṇava teachings, everything here, including the sporting propensity, is an imperfect or distorted reflection of the original, blissful activities of all-attractive Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Unfortunately, although in this material realm sports may be attractive, their charm is illusory. We can't enjoy the Real Thing here. At best we can try to squeeze pleasure out of a perverted representation, like a mirage in the desert.

When it comes to genuine, pure fun or sport, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the unrivaled champion, the unabashed connoisseur, as we see in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.18.19: "Kṛṣṇa, who knows all sports and games, then called together the cowherd boys and spoke as follows: 'Hey cowherd boys! Let's play now! We'll divide ourselves into two even teams.'"

Ravīndra Svarūpa Dāsa has explained how the Lord's pleasure in sport or play, unlike ours, is not materially motivated or contaminated; it is transcendentally ecstatic and pure:

> God is playful: the Sanskrit term for divine activity is, in fact, *līlā* – play. By His inconceivable power God seamlessly unites in His descents very serious purpose (to save humanity) with sheer sport. Thus, as Matsya [His incarnation as the divine fish], He frolics in the waves of the deluge; as Varāha [the transcendental boar-*avatāra*] He enjoys a good fight. In all descents we see Him delighting in drawing out the possibilities of a particular role, a player in a play.
>
> The idea of *līlā* captures a defining element of divine activity: it is unmotivated. All human acts spring from motives, desire for what we lack or fear we will lack. But God already has everything. He has nothing to gain or lose. ("The Descent of God," *Back to Godhead*, May 1985)

The Tenth Canto of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.44.29) describes how Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma celebrated Their victory over King Kaṁsa's demoniac wrestlers Cāṇūra, Muṣṭika, Kūṭa, Śala, and Tośala: "Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma then called Their young cowherd boyfriends to join Them, and in their company the Lords danced about and sported, Their ankle bells resounding as musical instruments played." The purport to this verse, by Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples, notes: "Nowadays we see that in championship boxing matches, as soon as there is a victory, all the friends and relatives of the victorious boxer rush into the ring to congratulate him, and often the champion will dance about in great happiness. Exactly in this mood, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma danced about, celebrating Their victory with Their friends and relatives."

Try as we might we can't really win here, and even if we do, none of us can enjoy our hard-earned victories for long.

Scriptures describe how when Kṛṣṇa dances playfully on the hoods of the poisonous serpent Kāliya, the demoniac snake is humbled and purified. The *Bhāgavatam* (2.7.34–35) says that even when Kṛṣṇa kills inimical attackers – humans like the evil King Kaṁsa or animals such as the aggressive bull-demon Ariṣṭāsura – "The demons, thus being killed, would attain either the impersonal *brahmajyoti* or His personal abode in the Vaikuṇṭha planets."

Indeed, Lord Kṛṣṇa's sportive *līlās* yield only spiritual benefit and bliss for everyone, even "spectators" like you and me when we simply read or hear about them. In the material world, however, anyone who tries to imitate the Lord's sporting nature becomes implicated in the law of karma. For example, unlike the entirely positive results when Kṛṣṇa killed the bull-demon, when a bullfighter kills a bull the result is suffering for the bull and the bullfighter. The spectators become implicated in the karma as well.

Another problem is that nearly all the athletes we admire or idolize are not pure devotees of the Lord, and are thus unworthy of the inflated adulation they often receive. For example, even though millions of fans once practically deified the well-known American football player O. J. Simpson for his athletic skill, he was charged with murder and later imprisoned for another crime and is no longer considered a hero. Many professional, amateur, even Olympic athletes – supposed role models or heroes – have been prosecuted for doping, cheating, spousal abuse, and even homicide. Such athletes may entertain us, but they cannot free us from the material world, which, as Kṛṣṇa explains to Arjuna in *Bhagavad-gītā* 8.15, is *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam*, a place of misery and impermanence. Try as we might we can't really win here, and even if we do, none of us can enjoy our hard-earned victories for long.

Wasting Time

As a compassionate Vaiṣṇava, Śrīla Prabhupāda was *para-duḥkha-duḥkhī*, unhappy to see others' suffering. Once, on a morning walk near a golf course in Dallas, he asked, "What are these men doing?"

When told that they were playing golf, with a tear in his eye Prabhupāda declared, "See how they are wasting their time, hitting this little ball."

The Christian evangelist Billy Graham once implied that sports are ultimately less important: "God answers my prayers everywhere except on the golf course," he joked.

For any soul fortunate enough to have attained a human birth, Prabhupāda regarded mundane sports as simply a waste of time, one among many futile attempts at happiness through sense gratification.

"In this age," he wrote, "men are victims not only of different political creeds and parties, but also of many different types of sense-gratificatory diversions, such as cinemas, sports, gambling, clubs, mundane libraries, bad association, smoking, drinking, cheating, pilfering, bickerings, and so on." (*Bhāgavatam* 1.1.10, Purport)

Of course, participatory sports do provide exercise and recreation, but serious devotees understand that mundane sport – including watching spectator sports – can be subtly or grossly polluting. Although often touted as good clean fun, major spectator sports are often connected with *vikarma,* or sinful, prohibited activities, through the products sold by their sponsors. Because sport in this world originates in Kṛṣṇa, who is all-attractive, it can attract us. But we should be aware that it can serve as one of the many weapons of mass distraction of Māyādevī, a dear servant of the Lord whose task is to test our priorities by offering illusory allurements.

If we see in mundane sports occasional flashes of beauty, exuberance, heroism, excitement, drama, spontaneity, creativity, determination, great teamwork, and brilliant tactics – the skill, artistry, or prowess of a Pele, Muhammad Ali, Michael Phelps, Martina Navratilova, or Usain Bolt – we can remember that Kṛṣṇa tells us, "Know that all opulent, beautiful, and glorious creations spring from but a spark of My splendor" and "I am the ability in man." (*Gītā* 10.41, 7.8)

Lord Kṛṣṇa, however, does not want us to loiter in the material world trying to extract a mere spark of His splendor through perverted reflections in materialistic stadiums or on dazzling television screens. He beseeches us to attain His *padam avyayam*, or eternal spiritual realm, as Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

> That *padam avyayam*, or eternal kingdom, can be reached by one who is *nirmāna-moha*. What does this mean? We are after designations. Someone wants to become "sir," someone wants to become "lord," someone wants to become the president or a rich man or a king or something else.… Designations and attachments are due to our lust and desire, our wanting to lord it over the material nature. As long as we do not give up this propensity of lording it over material nature, there is no possibility of returning to the kingdom of the Supreme, the *sanātana-dhāma*. That eternal kingdom, which is never destroyed, can be approached by one who is not bewildered by the attractions of false material enjoyments, who is situated in the service of the Supreme Lord. One so situated can easily approach that supreme abode. (*Gītā* 15.5, Purport)

False Designations

We already have plenty of material designations: man or woman, American or Russian, black or white, Hindu, Christian, Jew, or Muslim. Do we really need to create more for ourselves? These superficial, material self-conceptions simply divide and bewilder us, causing us to forget our real spiritual identity. To get out of this dangerous material world, we must be free of all such false designations, or *upādhis*. Clearly, if we

(*please turn to page 31*)

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Fulfilled by the Simple Life

AS SATYARĀJA DĀSA points out in this issue's cover story, one of the main components of Śrīla Prabhupāda's vision for New Vrindaban was simple living. Though Prabhupāda grew up in Calcutta and lived in cities as a family man, he loved the simple, natural, agrarian way of life and was happy to do without many of the modern conveniences most of us hold dear.

Prabhupāda presented various arguments in favor of the simple life, all of them grounded in Lord Kṛṣṇa's teachings in the *Bhagavad-gītā*. For example, in a 1966 lecture, Prabhupāda illustrated our misguided desires for what we think are solutions to our problems.

"A diseased man, a suffering man, suppose he has got a severe headache. Now, he sometimes thinks, 'Oh, I am suffering. If instead of a headache, if there would have been some other pain in the hand or feet, then I would have been glad.' It is like that. Our thoughts are like that. We don't want to get rid of the pains."

We think we'll be happy by increasing our "material necessities" (a favored phrase of Prabhupāda's), but that won't work.

Prabhupāda continued with another example. In India, men would sometimes pull a boat up a river by attaching a rope to it and walking along the riverbank. This task was naturally very painful to the feet.

"So he is thinking, 'When I shall be a very rich man, then I shall cover this bank of the river with soft pillows so . . . I shall have no pain.'"

The poor boat-puller never considers that as a rich man he won't have to pull the boat anymore. Our thinking is like his. If we're not rich, we tend to think that money will solve our problems, and if we're rich, we never give up the desire to get richer. It's rare to find someone who says, "I have everything I need," and even rarer to find someone who says, "I have too much. Let me simplify my life and permanently solve all my problems by dedicating myself to the spiritual pursuit."

What we generally see is that people work hard to fill their lives with artificial luxuries. The result of all that hard work is dissatisfaction. Acquiring more and more stuff can never truly satisfy us because we're spiritual beings with spiritual needs. To find fulfillment, we need to reconnect with Kṛṣṇa, the source of all happiness.

This basic principle of Kṛṣṇa consciousness lies at the heart of the devotee's quest for a simpler way of life. It's an important point to grasp, and until we do so, we'll fall victim to the allure of material things. There's nothing wrong with living a comfortable life and practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness in that environment, but modern life abounds in ways to distract us from our essential task of making spiritual progress. So we have to be careful.

On early-morning walks with his disciples, Śrīla Prabhupāda would often remark on how people were rushing to work at breakneck speed while he and his disciples were enjoying a park or seashore and discussing spiritual topics. He also liked to point out that although the devotees were not working hard "like asses," they were serving Kṛṣṇa and therefore He was fulfilling all their needs. A simple life of service to Kṛṣṇa, Prabhupāda would maintain, is the key to satisfaction and fulfillment.

– Nāgarāja Dāsa

VEDIC THOUGHTS

Modern men want to see everything with their eyes, although they are not sufficiently qualified. Consequently, they disbelieve in the existence of the demigods or of the Supreme God. They should see through the pages of authentic scriptures and should not simply believe their unqualified eyes. Even in these days, God can also be seen by qualified eyes tinged with the ointment of love of God.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.6.29, Purport

Actions performed only out of a sense of duty have their effect only on the mind, intelligence, and false ego, whereas actions done in love and devotion, with attachment to the Supreme, have their effect on the soul. Pure attachment, devotional service, emanates from the soul.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Uncommon Conversations, Conversation 7

O learned Uddhava, those who fix their consciousness on Me, giving up all material desires, share with Me a happiness that cannot possibly be experienced by those engaged in sense gratification.

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.12

Association with a devotee, the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, and the nature of devotional service help one to give up all undesirable association and gradually attain elevation to the platform of love of Godhead.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 24.104

In an assembly of pure devotees, there is no question of discussing material subjects like politics and sociology. In an assembly of pure devotees, there is discussion only of the qualities, forms, and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is praised and worshiped with full attention. In the association of pure devotees, by constantly hearing such topics respectfully, even a person who wants to merge into the existence of the Absolute Truth abandons this idea and gradually becomes attached to the service of Vāsudeva.

Jaḍa Bharata
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.12.13

Let the poets continue to rave about poetry, and let the Vedic scholars incessantly praise the nectar derived from Brahman realization. I myself will take shelter of a beautiful youth who is decorated with a garland made of wildflowers, holding a flute to His blossoming lips.

Śrīla Īśvara Purī
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Padyāvalī*

He is neither large nor infinitesimal; yet He is larger and smaller than everything else. He is said to be devoid of color; yet He is dark blue, and the corners of His eyes are reddish. By the play of His personal powers, the Supreme Lord is known by contradictory designations. Yet He is the Supreme, and faults should never be ascribed to Him. In Him all contrary qualities combine.

Kūrma Purāṇa
Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛta 2.2.179, Commentary

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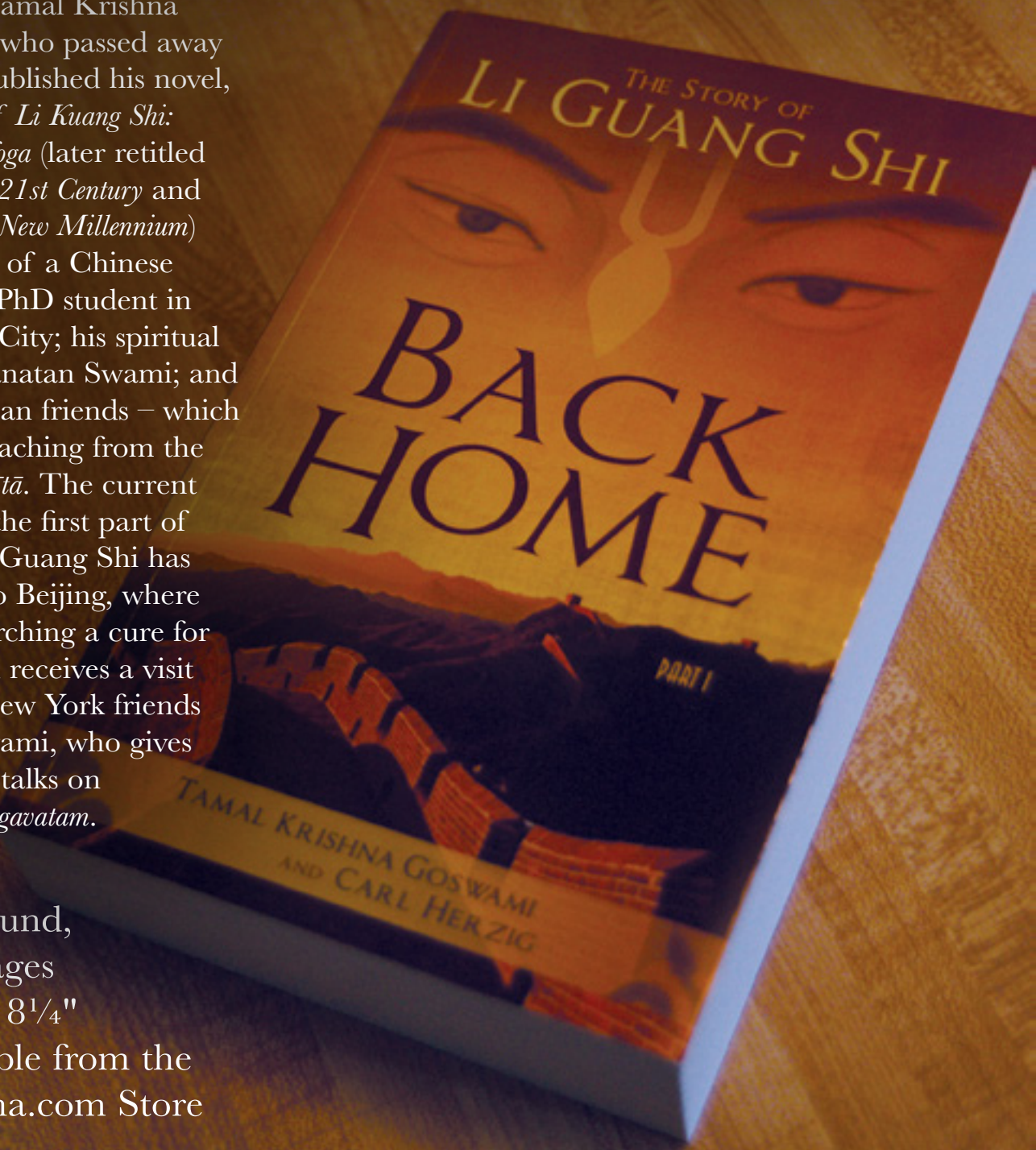

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